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SCRIPTURE PROVERBS,  
Illustrated, Annotated, and Applied.





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BY

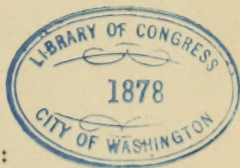
FRANCIS JACOX,

AUTHOR OF

'AT NIGHTFALL AND MIDNIGHT,' 'TRAITS OF CHARACTER,' ETC.

Καί τινες ἔλεγον· Τί ἂν θέλοι ὁ σπερμολόγος οὗτος λέγειν ; (And some said, What will this babbler [seed-picker, grain-gatherer] say ?)—ACTS xvii. 18.

Καί εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· Ὑμεῖς οἴδατε τὸν ἄνδρα καὶ τὴν ἀδολεσχίαν αὐτοῦ· (And he said unto them, Ye know the man and his communication).—2 KINGS ix. 11 (LXX.).



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## PREFACE.

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THE title at first thought of for this book was *Scripture Saws and Modern Instances*. But 'modern' no longer has the same meaning as in Shakspeare's time; and 'saws,' however good an old word in itself, might to some appear to smack of levity as applied to holy writ. So the present title was fixed upon, instead.

Proverbs, in a precisely defined sense, or at least in the commonly accepted and approved sense, perhaps only a spare and sparse minority of the texts in this volume can properly be called. But the same thing may virtually be said of a large part of the canonical Book of Proverbs itself, and from it most of them are taken. The first two chapters are concerned with examples of the popular saw or adage, cited in Scripture as such; the third, on Heaviness for a Night, treats of a verse which, though not in form or design a proverb, may be regarded as one in all practical effect

and usage ; and so of other texts, here consigned to the same category, because expressed with a terse emphasis which makes them, while retaining their native stamp of sacred dignity, familiar in our mouths as household words.

The plan adopted in these pages is identical with that pursued in the compiler's previous volumes. A text is taken, and in the illustrations, annotations, and applications which he proceeds to accumulate upon it and around it, (or, as the *Dunciad* might suggest, about it and about it,) he allows himself such latitude as sometimes seemingly to get out of his latitude altogether ; such longitude as may be got out of that term, rather as a graphical than a geographical expression.

As to what there may discoverably or conjecturally be of his own in this volume, as in foregoing ones, the proportion of that to borrowed capital is so infinitesimally small, that, on the score alike of quantity and of quality, for all practical purposes, whether of credit or debit, in the writer's balance of accounts, it had best be ignored altogether.

The *σπερμολόγος* of the first motto on his title-page might perhaps be worse rendered than by

the Shakspearian phrase, a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles. But all who are in the least likely to become purchasers know him of old. They have taken his measure, nor has he outgrown it. And to them he may say, at once demonstratively, deferentially, and deprecatingly, in the German rendering of the second motto, (and a lexicon may throw a sinister side-light on the significance of ἀδολεσχίαν, to any whose Greek is becoming, like Hamlet's starved steed adage, 'something musty,') Ihr kennet doch den Mann wohl, und was er sagt.

A considerable number of subjects for which no space could be found in the present volume, stand over for future publication, whether in the form of a Second Series, or as a separate work.

F. J.

*September, 1874.*





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# SCRIPTURE PROVERBS.

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## I.

### *SAUL AMONG THE PROPHETS.*

I SAMUEL x. 11, 12.

**I**T was they that were his old acquaintance, "all that knew him beforetime," that exclaimed, one to another, "What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?" when they saw and heard him prophesying among the company of prophets. Sent out to seek his father's stray asses,—well and good; there he might be in his element, and in the success of such a mission there would be nothing for his acquaintance to wonder at. But prophesying was altogether another matter. Was not the young man stepping, or striding rather, out of his sphere? And so it became a proverb, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

Ages later, another Saul excited a quite equal amount of astonishment, when from anti-christian zealot he turned Christian all at once and altogether. Saul of Tarsus a disciple! The disciples themselves believed not that he *was* a disciple.

The original proverb connected with the name may be variously interpreted and applied. The most obvious interpretation seems to be that which makes it in effect identical with the New Testament adage, or saw, about the prophet being of no account in his own country, or

in his father's house.\* An old divine speaks of men as naturally given to malign the greatness of a fellow-citizen or one of the same household: they think the nearness of it upbraids and obscures them: "A prophet may, without the help of his prophetic spirit, foresee that he shall have but little honour in his own country." Is not this the carpenter's son? and have we not seen Him in His shop and His cottage among His pitiful kindred?

*Que j'ai toujours haï les pensées du vulgaire!* avows La Fontaine:—

"Qu'il me semble profane, injuste, et téméraire,  
Mettant de faux milieux entre la chose et lui,  
Et mesurant par soi ce qu'il voit en autrui!

"Le maître d'Épicure en fit l'apprentissage.  
Son pays le crut fou. Petits esprits! Mais quoi!  
Aucun n'est prophète chez soi."†

Trying to interest Sir Robert Peel—who, of all our leading public men, had the credit of being the one who perhaps best appreciated science—in the fortunes of Robert Brown, Humboldt sarcastically said, "When Robert Brown travels in Germany, his arrival in a town is no sooner known than the young men gather under the great man's window, and salute him with a serenade; when he returns to his own country, nobody notices his existence, and the Minister who claims to be the especial friend and patron of science does not know the name of the man whose work will survive when the British Parliament itself is forgotten." Prave 'ords! as Parson Evans has it.

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\* Of which saw, or adage, a chapter of illustrations may be seen in *Secular Annotations on Scripture Texts*, First Series, pp. 143-147.

† Démocrite et les Abdéritains.

In conversation with James Smith, Crabbe is said to have expressed great astonishment at his own popularity in London, adding, "In my own village they think nothing of me." When Mr. Crabb Robinson was sojourning in the Lake Country in 1816, he entered in that omnivorous Journal of his what he regarded as "a singular illustration of the maxim, 'A prophet is not without honour save in his own country.' Mr. Hutton, a very gentlemanly and seemingly intelligent man, asked me, 'Is it true—as I have heard reported—that Mr. Wordsworth ever wrote verses?'"

The villagers in Schiller's *Maid of Orleans* are as much taken by surprise at Joan's ecstatic previsions as were the neighbours of Kish at the prophesyings of his stalwart son.

"— What strange power

Hath seized the maiden?—Mark her flashing eye,  
Her glowing cheek, which kindles as with fire!

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

Hark how she speaks! Why, whence can she obtain  
This glorious revelation?"

Archbishop Trench's comment on what grew to be a proverb in Israel, is, that when the son of Kish revealed of a sudden that nobler life which had hitherto been slumbering in him, alike undreamt of by himself and by others, took his part and place among the sons of the prophets, and, borne along in their enthusiasm,\* praised and prophesied as they did, showing that he was indeed turned into another man, the question raised, by

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\* It is characteristic of Lord Shaftesbury of the *Characteristics* to "pretend not to determine" how far (his are the italics and his the capitals) "that *dark* ENTHUSIASM or *evil Spirit*" which perturbed the first monarch of the Jewish nation, himself "of a *Melancholy Complexion*," "might resemble that of *Prophecy*, experienced by him even after his Apostacy [1 Sam. xix. 23, 24]." Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*, vol. iii. p. 116, edit. 1732.

some probably in sincere astonishment, by some in irony and unbelief, was one which found and still finds its application so often as any reveals of a sudden, at some crisis of his life, qualities for which those who knew him the longest had hitherto given him no credit, a nobleness which had been latent in him until now, a power of taking his place among the worthiest and the best, which none until now had at all given him credit for.

Milverton the essayist disputes the correctness of Ellesmere's phrase, "domestic malignity," in such cases. It is not malignity, he contends; at least very often not; frequently it is mere ignorance. "If you had a younger brother, of great musical talents, his gaining any honour or reward for their exercise would prove to you the existence of those talents in a way which you would never have arrived at for yourself." Such honours, in such a case, not only reward merit, but declare its existence. In a more recent publication, Sir Arthur Helps begs attention to a "most important" bit of advice, and that is, to praise those you live with, if they really deserve it; not to be silent upon their merits, for you should cultivate their reasonable self-esteem. If they have merits, other people—strangers—will, he argues, tell them of it, and they think it unkind of you who have lived with them, and ought to love them, not to have recognized their merits. "A person shall live with a person his junior, and during the whole of his life shall never have told that junior of his good qualities or his merits; and it is only perhaps when that first person dies, that the other finds out that, during the time they had lived together, he had been thoroughly appreciated; but, unfortunately, it has been a silent appreciation." The late Lord Lytton reckoned it a singular fact that we never seem to judge of our near kindred so well as



we judge of others. "I appeal," says Morton Devereux, "to any one, whether, of all people by whom he has been mistaken, he has not been most often mistaken by those with whom he was brought up." He has grown rather more cynical by the time he observes in opening Book the Sixth of his autobiography, that, in general, men are the less mourned by their families in proportion as they are the more mourned by the community: "The great are seldom amiable; and those who are the least lenient to our errors are invariably our relations."

Goethe's Olearius confesses to having Latinized his name, from Oilman, after the example and with the advice of many jurists, for the decoration of the title-pages of his legal dissertations; and Liebetraut tells him he did well to translate himself: "A prophet is not honoured in his own country; your books if written in German might have shared the same fate." The Abbot repeats the Scripture saw about the prophet at home failing of honour; and Liebetraut asks him, "But do you know why, most reverend sir?" "Because he was born and bred here," the Abbot replies. Well, that may be one reason, Liebetraut agrees; another is, "because, upon a nearer acquaintance with these gentlemen, the halo of glory and honour shed around them by the distant haze totally disappears; and they are then seen to be nothing more than tiny rushlights." It is noticeable, as a less caustic observer has said, that nobody was ever canonized till he was safe from the report of near neighbours, and remembered only for his acts, not with the accompaniment of the daily life in which they were worked out under the scrutiny of eye-witnesses. "People who are critical enough of the virtue of their own times are charitable to Roman patriots or Christian ascetics." Lovers of the past, *laudatores temporis acti*, have been known to settle the question by a Scriptural

quotation, "there were giants in those days"—and in looking back on great men, conspicuous and eminent for one virtue, and constituting our example, the world is ready to assume that they were everything else besides. "But, in fact, who knows what Curtius was in the bosom of his family?" Dr. Boyd questions whether any clergyman is a saint to his beadle. And he calls to remembrance his once hearing a clever and enthusiastic young lady complain of what she had suffered on meeting "a certain great bishop" at dinner: no doubt he was dignified, pleasant, clever; but the mysterious halo was no longer around his head. *Major e longinquo reverentia*, says Tacitus: respect is greater a good way off.

In the want of the familiarity which proverbially breeds contempt, Professor Marsh finds the true explanation of the different impressions produced by euphemistic and vulgar words of the same meaning. And he holds it to be for the same reason that coarseness of thought, or of diction, in the literature of languages in which we are not entirely at home, is a less repulsive, and therefore, perhaps, a more dangerous source of corruption.

The deadliest foe to love, accomplished St. John is made to affirm by one of his foremost admirers and imitators, is custom; for with custom die away the delusions and the mysteries which encircle it,—custom leaving nothing to romance, and often but little to respect: the whole character is bared before us like a plain, and the heart's eye grows wearied with the sameness of the survey. "And to weariness succeeds distaste, and to distaste, one of the myriad shapes of the Proteus Aversion; so that the passion we would make the rarest of treasures fritters down to a very instance of the commonest of proverbs; and out of familiarity cometh indeed contempt." Another popular writer takes objec-

tion to the saw, asserting that contempt is only engendered of familiarity with things which are in themselves base and spurious. "The priest, who is familiar with the altar, learns no contempt for its sacred images ; but it is rather the ignorant neophyte who sneers and sniggers at things which he cannot understand." So again the artist becomes only more reverent as toil and study make him more familiar with his art ; its eternal sublimity grows upon him, and he worships his ideal as devoutly when he drops his brush or his chisel after a life of patient labour, as he did when first he "ground colour or pointed rough blocks of marble for his master." Churchill but wrote like his very unclerical self when he maintained, that were Jove to lay his thunder by, and with his brethren of the sky descend to earth,—

"He would be found, with all his host,  
A nine days' wonder at the most.  
Would we in trim our honours wear,  
We must preserve them from the air;  
What is familiar men neglect,  
However worthy of respect."

Even the most brilliant talent may lose its effect by too great familiarity, writes Beethoven to the Archduke Rudolph, when advising him to make a pause with the Lobkowitz concerts. Dr. South expatiates on the virtue of distance in preserving respect—so apt are we to imagine worth in things beyond our reach. "Moses was never more revered than when he wore his veil." The very *sanctum sanctorum* would not have been so profoundly venerated by the Jews had they been permitted to enter it, and to gaze and stare upon it as often as they did upon other parts of the temple. The high priest himself, we are reminded, who alone was suffered to enter into it, yet was to do so but once a year ; lest the frequency of the sight might insensibly

lessen that adoration which so sacred a thing was still to maintain upon his thoughts. "Many men, who in their absence have been great and admirable for their fame, find a diminution of that respect upon their personal presence; even the great Apostle St. Paul himself found it so; as he himself tells us, 2 Cor. x. 10. And upon the same account it is, that the kings of some nations, to keep up a living and a constant awe of themselves in the minds of their subjects, show themselves to them but once a year; and even that perhaps may be something of the oftenest, considering that persons whose greatness generally consists rather in the height of their condition, than in the depth of their understanding, seldom appear freely and openly, but they expose themselves in more senses than one." Philip van Artevelde speaks for himself, as an exceptional man, a man of men, when he says,

"That with familiarity respect  
Doth slacken, is a word of common use.  
I never found it so."

Mr. Lewes protests against the notion of familiarity breeding contempt in any but contemptible minds, or for things contemptible. Thus, in art, a master-piece excites no sudden enthusiasm, but its emphasis grows with familiarity: we never become disenchanted; we grow more and more awestruck at its infinite wealth. "Homer, Shakspeare, Raphael, Beethoven, Mozart, never storm the judgment; but, once fairly in possession, they retain it with increasing influence." So is Southey strenuous against an unreserved acceptance of the maxim, *omne ignotum pro magnifico*. There are things which we do not undervalue because we are familiar with them, but which are admired the more thoroughly they are known and understood: it is thus, he contends, with the grand objects of nature and the



finest works of art—with whatsoever is truly great and excellent. Whately speaks of early and long familiarity as being apt to generate a careless almost stupid indifference to many objects which, if new to us, would excite a great and a just admiration; and many are inclined even to hold cheap a stranger, who expresses wonder at what seems to us very natural and simple, merely because we have been used to it, while, in fact, our apathy is perchance a more just subject of contempt than his astonishment. A very different expositor of the uses and abuses of familiarity takes the instance of a man who sees Niagara for the first time, and shouts with rapture, or is speechless with admiration; but who, the next day, thinks it simply a very fine fall; and to whom, the next week, it does not appear to tumble half so grandly as it did—and he wishes the water would come down in another fashion. “Unless, like a fire-work, it alters its effects every minute, he wearies of it. And yet it is as grand as ever; the same volume is pouring forth,—the same iris of brilliant light encompasses it,—it sparkles and flashes as of old.” But the gazer in question measures the sensation only by the first effect it produced; and unless it can, in itself, exceed this by some new and utter convulsion of its nature, it is, to him, no more worth regarding. Dr. Thomas Brown expatiates on the fact that objects which originally excited the very highest interest, cease to interest, if long continued, and soon become painful. Who, that is not absolutely deaf, he asks, could sit for a whole day in a music-room, if the same air, however exquisite, were begun again and again in the very instant of its last note? The most beautiful couplet of the most beautiful poem, if repeated to us without intermission, for a very few minutes, would, he pretty safely maintains, excite more uneasiness than could have been felt from a single



recitation of the dullest stanza of the most soporific inditer of rhymes. *Quod rarum carum*, runs the Latin adage; *vilescit quotidianum*. Pericles is said to have been careful not to make his person cheap among the people, and to have shown himself among them at discreetly distant intervals. Peter Pindar's Windsor gardeners, "lo! with majesty grew tired," and soon began to "fancy monarchs much like common folk." Shakespeare's Fourth Henry tells the future Harry the Fifth, contrasting the cautious dignity and self respecting policy of Bolingbroke with the cheap familiarities of the madcap prince, Falstaff's fellow in all companies,

"Had I so lavish of my presence been,  
So common-hackney'd in the eyes of men,  
So stale and cheap to vulgar company;  
Opinion, that did help me to the crown,  
Had still kept loyal to possession,  
And left me in reputeless banishment,  
A fellow of no mark, nor likelihood.  
By being seldom seen, I could not stir,  
But, like a comet, I was wonder'd at:  
That men would tell their children, 'That is he,'  
Others would say, 'Where? which is Bolingbroke?'"

Thus did he keep his person fresh and new; his presence, like a robe pontifical, ne'er seen, but wondered at; and so his state, seldom, but sumptuous, showed like a feast, and won, by rareness, such solemnity. Meanwhile, the "skipping king" ambled up and down with shallow jesters, and mingled his royalty with capering fools—

"Grew a companion in the common streets,  
Enfeoff'd himself to popularity,  
That being daily swallowed by men's eyes,  
They surfeited with honey, and began  
To loathe the taste of sweetness, whereof little  
More than a little is by much too much.  
So, when he had occasion to be seen,

He was but as the cuckoo is in June,  
 Heard, not regarded ; seen, but with such eyes  
 As, sick and blunted with community,  
 Afford no extraordinary gaze,  
 Such as is bent on sun-like majesty  
 When it shines seldom in admiring eyes ;  
 But rather drowzed, and hung their eyelids down,  
 Slept in his face, and render'd such aspect  
 As cloudy men use to their adversaries ;  
 Being with his presence glutted, gorged, and full."

*Continuus aspectus minus verendos magnos homines facit*, is Livy's warning. If a prince, says one of our seventeenth century divines, condescend to be familiar with those of basest degree, shall his condescension therefore unking him, and his familiarity rob him of his royalty? "The case is the same with Christ. Men cannot persuade themselves that a deity and infinity should lie within so narrow a compass as the contemptible dimensions of a human body: that omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence should be ever wrapped in swaddling clothes, and abased to the homely usages of a stable and a manger: that the glorious artificer of the whole universe, who 'spread out the heavens like a curtain, and laid the foundations of the earth,' could ever turn carpenter, and exercise an inglorious trade in a little cell."

Recurring to the more direct import of the text concerning Saul among the prophets, another application of it is found when one does not, as Dr. Trench words it, "step truly, but only affects suddenly to step, into a higher school," to take his place in a nobler circle of life than that in which hitherto he has moved. *Ne sutor ultra crepidam* is a saw traditionally as old as Apelles. "Chacun à son métier doit toujours s'attacher," is the metrical moral of a fable of La Fontaine's. It is pre-

sumably for the consolation of smaller men, though to the grief of judicious admirers, that gifted souls, every now and then, risk their reputation in their own art by meddling with one for which they have no training. "Newton will rush into theology. Turner will paint figure-subjects," and, it might be added, compose *The Fallacies of Hope*. "Frederick will compete with Voltaire in French poetry. Raffaele models a feeble statue of Jonah. Canova attempts oil-painting." And the wisdom of the old saw *Ne sutor ultra crepidam* is said with truth to be daily receiving fresh illustrations: the strange impulse to forsake one's proper line, and attempt something new, foreign, and fascinating, has always afforded rare sport to cynics and satirists, and is indeed one of the most pitiful weaknesses to which human nature is liable. When Dr. Radcliffe was reluctantly summoned at the last by the Princess of Denmark, afterwards Queen Anne, who personally disliked him, to save, if might be, the ebbing life of her son, the heir-presumptive to the crown, he at once pronounced the case hopeless, but vented his abuse upon the two other physicians in no measured terms,—telling them it would have been happy for this nation had the first been bred up (like his father) a basket-maker, and had the other continued making havoc of nouns and pronouns in the quality of a country schoolmaster, rather than have ventured out of his reach, in the practice of an art which was utterly beyond him, and for dabbling in which he ought to have been whipped with one of his own rods. Dr. John Brown in his essay on "The Doctor," makes out the first duty of that personage to be to cure you—if he can: that is what we call him in for; and a doctor, be he never so clever and delightful, who doesn't cure, is likened to a mole-catcher who can't catch moles, or a watchmaker who can do everything but make your watch

go. We are then told of a Perthshire D.D., that when preaching in the country he found his shoes wanted mending, and asked the brother-minister whom he was assisting to tell him of a good cobbler, and one "Thomas Rattray, a godly man, and an elder," being named, the D.D. rejoined, "But can he mend my shoes? that's what I want; I want a shoemaker; I'm not wanting an elder." And it turned out that Tammas was a better elder than shoemaker. This reminds one of Macaulay's argument about nobody having ever thought of compelling cobblers to make any declaration on the true faith of a Christian; and his assertion that any man would rather have his shoes mended by a heretical cobbler than by a person who had subscribed all the thirty-nine articles, but had never handled an awl—men acting thus, not because they are indifferent to religion, but because they do not see what religion has to do with the mending of their shoes. To the same effect is his argument in another place, that although it is of much more importance that the knowledge of religious truth should be widely diffused than that the art of sculpture should flourish among us, yet does it by no means follow that the Royal Academy ought to unite with its present functions those of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, to distribute theological tracts, and to send forth missionaries; for the result of such a course would be that we should have the worst possible academy of arts, and the worst possible society for the promotion of Christian knowledge.

When a late popular entertainer gave signs of panting to be the social regenerator of his age, and to be allowed to give his opinion on all moot questions, religious, social, and political—but especially on missionaries and their work in the far east—he was told by the critics that he was, confessedly, an excellent judge of wide-awakes and

travelling knapsacks, and had an admirable way of tracking the British hero, Jenkins, round both the hemispheres ; but that he should leave philanthropic societies and religion alone. The power of talking slang he might possess in perfection, but when he mixed with it discussion of serious things, "he gives us," complained his censors, "more than we either desire or deserve." It has been said there are three degrees of competency and incompetency—to be able to do a thing, to be unable and know that you are unable, and to be unable and not know that you are unable. "Nobody would have found fault with Richelieu for not writing good pastorals, but much fault has been deservedly found with him for complacently publishing bad ones." One of Johnson's *Ramblers* was indited to show how little the strongest faculties can perform beyond the limits of their own province. Johnson himself is taxed by Macaulay with just this kind of transgression in the case of his *Taxation no Tyranny*, which "was a great mistake." Not that Johnson failed, on his critic's showing, because his mind was less vigorous than when he wrote *Rasselas* in the evenings of a week, but because he had foolishly chosen, or suffered others to choose for him, a subject such as he would at no time have been competent to treat. He failed, Macaulay insists, as the greatest men must fail when they attempt to do that for which they are unfit, as Burke would have failed if Burke had tried to write comedies like Sheridan ; as Reynolds would have failed if Reynolds had tried to paint landscapes like those of Wilson. No Reynolds, no Wilson, was the artist to whom Peter Pindar addressed the fifteenth of his Odes to the Royal Academicians :

"Well pleased, thy horses, Stubbs, I view,  
And eke thy dogs, to Nature true :  
Let modern artists match thee, if they can ;



Such animals thy genius suit—  
Then stick, I beg thee, to the brute,  
And meddle not with woman, nor with man.”

To brutes did Dean Swift, with something of characteristic brutality, as the French phrase goes—and Swift was cynic enough to at least verge on the brutal, cynicism being in the nature of the thing, or by the nature of the beast, brutality,—to brutes did the author of *Gulliver* ascribe a marked superiority over men in respect of respecting the bounds of their capacity, and recognizing the length of their tether. In one of his metrical pieces he affirms, for instance, that

“Creatures of every kind but ours  
Well comprehend their natural powers,  
While we, whom reason ought to sway,  
Mistake our talents every day.”

In another, that

“Brutes find out where their talents lie :  
A bear will not attempt to fly ;  
A founder'd horse will oft debate  
Before he tries a five-barr'd gate ;  
A dog by instinct turns aside,  
Who sees the ditch too deep and wide.  
But man we find the only creature  
Who, led by Folly, combats Nature ;  
Who, when she loudly cries Forbear !  
With obstinacy fixes there ;  
And where his genius least inclines,  
Absurdly bends his whole designs.”

La Bruyère speaks of this or that man who has “assez d'esprit pour exceller dans une certaine matière,” but not enough to see “qu'il doit se taire sur quelque autre dont il n'a qu'une faible connaissance : il sort hardiment des limites de son génie,” and forthwith is, to that extent, self-convicted of folly, and, what Dogberry so devoutly desired to be, written down an ass. Some men seem to take

literally the mis-readings or cross-readings of Shakspeare's sage serving-man in *Romeo and Juliet*: "It is written—that the shoemaker should meddle with his yard, and the tailor with his last, the fisher with his pencil, and the painter with his nets." Dryden has Englished the opening of Virgil's sixth Eclogue, where the sweet singer who first transferred to Rome Sicilian strains, essayed, too young, too high a theme of martial princes and tented fields, whereupon,

"Apollo check'd my pride, and bade me feed  
My fattening flocks, nor dare beyond the reed,"

or humble pastoral pipe. Dryden it is that Macaulay charges, as elsewhere we have already seen him charging Johnson, with overstepping his line of talent, and attempting success out of his natural sphere. Dryden saw, he remarks, that the greatest poets were never so successful as when they rushed beyond the ordinary bounds, and that some inexplicable good fortune preserved them from tripping even when they staggered on the brink of nonsense; but he did not perceive that they were guided and sustained by a power denied to himself. In this regard is Dryden contrasted with Horace, whose "admirable good sense" preserved him from the error of those contemporary imitators of Pindar whom he so happily compares to Icarus, the would-be flyer to heaven on waxen wings, but doomed to so fatal and ignominious a fall. Phœbus warns the Sabine farmer as well as the Mantuan shepherd, and to precisely the same effect:

"Phœbus volentem prælia me loqui,  
Victas et urbes, increpuit, lyrâ,  
Ne parva Tyrrhenum per æquor  
Vela darem.—"

The "admirable good sense" of Horace taught him to cultivate a style in which excellence was within his

reach ; and so doing, excel he did. Readers of the *Life*, who have first been intelligent readers of the *Works*, of Jane Austen, will appreciate her exemplary biographer's assurance that she was always very careful not to meddle with matters which she did not thoroughly understand. The Prince Regent's librarian at Carlton House, Mr. Clarke, writing at his royal master's instance, was very urgent that Miss Austen should take up a subject which she clearly felt to be not within the limits of her powers, or the proper field for their exercise. She wrote back, with her thanks for his kindness in hinting the sort of composition which might recommend her at present, and an expression of her belief that such an historical romance, founded on the fortunes of the House of Saxe-Coburg, might be much more to the purpose of profit or popularity than such pictures of domestic life in country villages as she dealt in. But then, she protested, she could no more write a romance than an epic poem. "I could not sit seriously down to write a serious romance under any other motive than to save my life ; and if it were indispensable for me to keep it up, and never relax into laughing at myself or at other people, I am sure I should be hung before I had finished the first chapter. No, I must keep to my own style, and go on in my own way ; and though I may never succeed again in that, I am convinced that I should totally fail in any other." *The Examiner* of Queen Anne's time, admitting the justice of military men's complaint against coffee-house critics who meddled with matters out of their sphere, was yet fain to retort that the soldiers of that day were, in their turn, but out of the way, unwisely addicted to "matters of the cabinet, which are always far above, or much beside their capacities. Soldiers may as well pretend to prescribe rules for trade, to determine points in philosophy,

to be moderators in an assembly of divines, or direct in a court of justice, as to misplace their talent in examining affairs of state." In a *Tatler* of about the same date, a correspondent from Amsterdam is graphic anent a play he has just been seeing there, acted by tradesmen, who, after their day's work was over, earned about a guilder a night by personating kings and generals: the hero of the tragedy he saw was a journeyman-tailor, and his first minister of state a coffee-man; and after the tragedy came a farce, "in which the cobbler did his part to a miracle; but, upon inquiry, I found he had really been working at his own trade, and representing on the stage what he acted every day in his shop." It was clearly a case of not *sutor ultra crepidam*. The cobbler knew what he was about, and stuck to his last with a will.

Dante points out in the depths of *l'Inferno* a certain shoemaker of Parma, Asdente by name, who deserted his business to practise the arts of divination:

"——Asdente mark,  
Who now were willing he had tended still  
The thread and cordwain, and too late repents."

An ironmonger, said Sydney Smith, is a very respectable man, so long as he is merely an ironmonger,—an admirable man, if he is a religious ironmonger; but a great blockhead, if he sets up for a bishop or a dean, and lectures upon theology. Captain Gronow devotes a section of his *Recollections* to "Hoby, the bootmaker, of St. James's Street," the opening sentence of which informs us that Mr. Hoby was not only the greatest and most fashionable bootmaker in London, but, in spite of the old adage, *Ne sutor*, "he employed his spare time with considerable success as a Methodist preacher at Islington." His eminence as a fashionable tradesman would not have saved him from the wit of the wittiest of

Edinburgh Reviewers ; any more than it would have done a century and a half previously from that of the wittiest of English poets, whose spleen was stirred to the uttermost whenever

“ Botchers left old clothes in the lurch,  
And fell to turn and patch the church ;  
Some cried the covenant, instead  
Of pudding-pies and ginger-bread.”

Nor was the *sutor* forgotten in a later canto : witness the couplet about the indulgence shown by the then ruling powers towards

“ A man that served them in a double  
Capacity, to teach and cobble.”

When Toplady found that John Wesley was leaving the doctrinal contest with him to be carried on by Olivers, he was incensed more and more, and called on the patriarch of Methodism to fight his own battles, and he would find the Reverend Augustus as ready as ever to meet him, “with the sling of reason and the stone of God’s Word in my hand. But let him not fight by proxy ; let his cobblers keep to their stalls ; let his tinkers mend their brazen vessels ; let his barbers confine themselves to their blocks and basins ; let his blacksmiths blow more suitable coals than those of nice controversy : every man in his own order.” And because Olivers had been a shoemaker, the “ever-memorable” vicar of Broad-Hembury attacked him on that score, with what Southey calls “abusive ridicule,” both in prose and in rhyme. In a doggerel dialogue, for instance, Toplady makes Wesley speak thus of his adjutant :

“ I’ve Thomas Olivers, the cobbler,  
No stall in England holds a nobler,  
A wight of talents universal,  
Whereof I’ll give a brief rehearsal :



He wields, beyond most other men,  
His awl, his razor, and his pen ;  
My beard he shaves, repairs my shoe,  
And writes my panegyric too ;  
He, with one brandish of his quill,  
Can knock down Toplady and Hill ;  
With equal ease, whene'er there's need,  
Can darn my stockings and my creed ;  
Can drive a nail, or ply the needle,  
Hem handkerchiefs, and scrape the fiddle ;  
Chop logic as an ass chews thistle,  
More skilfully than you can whistle ;  
And then when he philosophizes,  
No son of Crispin half so wise is.  
Of all my ragged regiment,  
This cobbler gives me most content :  
My forgeries and faith's defender,  
My barber, champion, and shoe-mender."

In private, however, Toplady is said to have done justice to this antagonist ; and we find him telling a correspondent, that had Mr. Olivers' understanding been cultivated by a liberal education, he would probably have made some figure in life. Not a whit, nevertheless, would better acquaintance have availed to abate Mr. Toplady's loyalty to the adage *Ne sutor*. If he ever read—which, as the elaborate Preface to Dr. Johnson's Dictionary contained the poem as a whole, he probably did—the advice of a sometime High Chancellor of England, Sir Thomas More, he most likely relished it keenly, and adopted it entirely :

" Wise men alwaye	A symple hatter
Affirme and sage	Should not go smatter
That 'tis best for a man	En philosophic ;
Diligently	Nor ought a peddlar
For to apply	Become a meddlar
To the business he can,	En theologic."
And in no wyse	
To enterprise	
Another facultie.	

## II.

### DAVID'S APPLICATION OF "THE PROVERB OF THE ANCIENTS."

I SAMUEL xxiv. 13.

**I**N the day that King Saul was in the hands of David in the cave, there wanted not one to advise that the persecuted fugitive should take the life of his persecutor, and so avenge him of his adversary. But the son of Jesse repudiated all vindictive counsels against the Lord's anointed. Hard pressed he was by the implacable king of Israel, who degraded his majesty by pursuit of so unpretending a fugitive,—for after whom was the king come out? "After a dead dog, after a flea?" And with proof positive and palpable of his having but now had the king's life in his hand, to that king he appealed and he protested, "The Lord judge between me and thee, and the Lord avenge me of thee; but mine hand shall not be upon thee. As saith the proverb of the ancients, Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked but mine hand shall not be upon thee." Had he meant wickedly, David would have done wickedly that day. But his heart was in this matter pure from wickedness. It was right in the sight of God. It was loyal to the king. A good tree bringeth forth good fruit. Wickedness is of the wicked. It is an abomination for kings to commit wickedness, and so is it for the heirs to kingdoms; for the throne is established by righteousness. A man that is royal must bear himself royally. *Noblesse oblige*. It was not for David to avenge himself—least of all by a stab in the dark.

Vain is the pleading of Shakspeare's Clarence, "If

God will be avenged for the deed" whose guilt the doomed man owns,—

"Take not the quarrel from His powerful arm,  
He needs no indirect or lawless course  
To cut off those that have offended Him."

Let thy arrows of revenge fly short, counsels the quaint old author of *Christian Morals*; "or be aimed like those of Jonathan, to fall beside the mark. Too many there be to whom a dead enemy smells well, and who find musk and amber in revenge. The ferity of such minds holds no rule in retaliations, requiring too often a head for a tooth, and the supreme revenge for trespasses which a night's rest should obliterate." But the sweetness of revenge is intoxicating with some natures, evil-natured. Sternly speaks Bothwellhaugh in Scott's ballad,—

"'Tis sweet to hear,  
In good greenwood, the bugle blown;  
But sweeter to Revenge's ear,  
To drink a tyrant's dying groan,"

Archbishop Trench professes to know nothing of its kind calculated to give one a more shuddering sense of horror than the series which might be drawn together of Italian proverbs in glorification of revenge—especially when we take them with the commentary which Italian history supplies, and which shows them no empty words, but the deepest utterances of the nation's heart. "There is no misgiving in these about the right of entertaining so deadly a guest in the bosom; on the contrary, one of them, exalting the sweetness of revenge, declares, 'Revenge is a morsel for God.'" *Vendetta, boccon di Dio*. Nor is there in them anything (far better if there were) of blind and headlong passion, but rather a "spirit of deliberate calculation, which makes the blood run cold." Thus, of others quoted by Dr. Trench, one

gives this advice: "Wait time and place to act thy revenge, for it is never well done in a hurry;" while another proclaims an immortality of hatred, which no spaces of intervening time shall have availed to weaken: "Revenge of an hundred years old hath still its sucking teeth" (*ha ancor i lattaiuoli*).

Among all warlike barbarians, Lord Macaulay has remarked, revenge is esteemed the most sacred of duties and the most exquisite of pleasures.

The spirit of revenge, says Izaak Walton, is so pleasing to mankind, that it is never conquered but by a supernatural grace, being indeed so deeply rooted in human nature, that to prevent the excess of it (for men would never know moderation), Almighty God allows not any degree of it to man, but says, "Vengeance is mine:" and although this be said by God Himself, yet is revenge so pleasing, that "man is hardly persuaded to submit the manage of it to the time, and justice, and wisdom of His Creator, but would hasten to be his own executioner of it." Dead Sea fruit, or worse, though it be, revenge is often and often too pleasant to the eye, and, at first, too sweet in the mouth, to be foregone.

It was in witnessing the execution of sixty-three retainers of the Lord of Balm, the accomplice of John of Hapsburg in the murder of the Emperor Albert, that the Empress Agnes exclaimed, as she watched the blood flow, "Now I bathe in honey-dew." What though she founded that magnificent convent of Königstein, of which fine ruins still remain? the rebuke of the hermit overtook the vengeful Empress: "God is not served by shedding innocent blood, and by building convents from the plunder of families, but by confession and forgiveness of sins." Vengeance was His, not hers. But the vindictive widow was in the mood to reply much as the Doge of Venice in Byron's tragedy, to the reminder,

"Heaven bids us to forgive our enemies," as Heaven will forgive them. "Amen. May Heaven forgive them." "And will you?" "Yes, when they are in heaven." "And not till then?"—*At vindicta bonum vitâ jucundius ipsâ*, urges one voice of two in Juvenal; but the other exclaims, Who talks this language? the illiterate fool, whose brutal passions are his only rule, *Nempe hoc indocti*, etc. "For, sure, revenge can never find a place but in a petty spirit, weak and base": *Quippe minuti Semper et infirmi est animi exiguique voluptas*. Talk of *voluptas*!—the relief and satisfaction found in that indulgence is no other, contends Shaftesbury, than the assuaging of the most torturous pain, and the alleviating the most weighty and pressing sensation of misery: the sensation of relief he asserts to be, in truth, no better than that from the rack itself. When Ripert wants to know what *attrait brûlant*, what overmastering *bonheur*, Laurent (in one of Soulié's historical fictions) can find in *la vengeance*, the latter breaks out, "Un attrait! un bonheur! C'est un effroi de toutes les heures et une torture de toutes les parties du cœur, et pourtant c'est une soif irrésistible, c'est la soif des damnés; c'est la soif de l'ivresse quand la poitrine brûle et demande, au lieu d'une eau pure, quelque vin qui la brûle davantage." As with the vindictive Annabella in Miss Baillie's *Witchcraft*, with her iterations (that deserve the Shakspearian epithet often conjoined with that word), "Revenge is sweet, revenge is noble, revenge is natural, what price is too dear for revenge?"—or again, that like-minded tamperer with the black art in Scott's *Rokeby*,—

"Here stood a wretch prepared to change  
His soul's redemption for revenge."

Not much better is the man described in Crabbe's *Tales of the Hall*,—



“ — who kindness will requite,  
But, injured once, revenge is his delight,—  
And he would spend the best of his estates  
To ruin, goods and body, them he hates.”

The tale preceding it is one of implacable vindictiveness, and includes this passage of colloquy between two differing spirits, on the subject of taking advantage of a rare and tempting opportunity :—

“ Revenge was thine—thou hadst the power, the right ;  
To give it up was Heaven’s own act to slight.”

“ Tell me not, sir, of rights, and wrongs, or powers !  
I felt it written, Vengeance is not ours.”

Like Corneille’s Antiochus : *J’en laisse la vengeance aux dieux qui les connaissent* ; and we have only to turn the page to find him congratulated, inasmuch as, by the seeming intervention of a higher Power, *La coupable est punie, et vos mains innocents*. Parson Dale calls revenge the sin of the uninstructed : the savage deems it noble, but Christ’s religion, which is the sublime civilizer, emphatically condemns it. Why ? “ Because religion ever seeks to ennoble man ; and nothing so debases him as revenge.” One who cherishes that passion is bidden look into his own heart, and tell whether, since he has so cherished it, he has not felt all sense of right and wrong confused—thus, whatever would before have seemed to him mean and base, appears now but just means to his ill ends. When Jane Eyre, as a child, tastes for the first time something of vengeance, “ as aromatic wine it seemed, on swallowing, warm and racy,” she says ; “ its after-flavour, metallic and corroding, gave me a sensation as if I had been poisoned.” The confession reads like a paraphrase of Dryden’s lines, indicating how, were sounder principles received and acted upon in this world of ours,—

“Revenge would into charity be changed,  
Because it costs too dear to be revenged ;  
It costs our quiet and content of mind,  
And when 'tis compassed leaves a sting behind.”

Achilles, in the eighteenth book of the Iliad, speaks of wrath and revenge as “far, far too dear to every mortal breast, sweet to the soul as honey to the taste, gathering like vapours of a noxious kind from fiery blood, and darkening all the mind.” When Ramorny desires to know what is the precious privilege in store for him, a prostrate, mutilated, crippled wretch, for whom nevertheless his wily physician promises such a treat to come, —“The dearest that mankind knows,” is Dwining’s answer ; and then, in the accent of a lover who utters the name of his beloved mistress, and expresses his passion for her in the very tone of his voice, he adds the word “Revenge.” In the hour of Elizabeth’s humiliation, Schiller’s Mary Stuart declares herself to be now happy indeed ; after whole years of sorrow and abasement, one moment of victorious revenge. “I plunged the steel in my oppressor’s breast. . . . She carries death within her breast. I know it.” Mr. de Quincey calls revenge a luxury, to those who *can* rejoice in it at all, so inebriating that possibly a man would be equally liable to madness, from the perfect gratification of his vindictive hatred or its perfect defeat. Of Blucher in Paris he says, “I have often wondered that he did not go mad with the fumes of gratified vengeance.” But after all, the pleasure of revenge is likened by Jeremy Taylor to the pleasure of eating chalk and coals ; a foolish disease made the appetite, and it is entertained with an evil reward ; it is like the feeding of a cancer or a wolf ; “the man is restless till it be done, and when it is, every man sees how infinitely he is removed from satisfaction or felicity.” Yet seems it as though never would human

nature outgrow a relish for sweetness which sweet singers are fain to glorify ; as when one of them sings that though sweet are our home recollections, though sweet are the tears that from tenderness fall, though sweet are our friendships, our hopes, our affections, revenge on a tyrant is sweetest of all. Does the reader remember St. Simon's frank—perhaps brutally frank—avowal of his rapture at the fall of the Duc du Maine? Dying with joy, he describes himself ; so oppressed that he feared he must swoon ; his heart dilated to such an excess, that it no longer found room to beat. "The violence I did myself, in order to let nothing escape me, was infinite ; yet was this torment itself delicious. . . . I had triumphed, I was revenged ; I swam in my vengeance ; I enjoyed the full accomplishment of desires the most vehement and continuous of all my life." We can fancy him prompt with an affirmative reply to each of those queries of Owen Feltham's which were meant to elicit a negative : Will it ease me, when I am vexed, to vex another ? Can another's suffering pain take off from my smart ? etc. A kind of frenzy, that old English moralist styles it, "and something irrational, because another hath done us a mischief, to hurt therefore ourselves that we may do him one. Perhaps it was from hence that poets have feigned that Nemesis was transformed by Jupiter into a goose (a silly creature), to show us the folly of revenge ; for, at best, it is but returning evil for evil. . . . And while we throw a petty vengeance on the head of our offending brother, we boldly pull the Almighty's on our own." When David, by what South terms a "happy and seasonable pacification" in the matter of Nabal, was "taken off from acting that bloody tragedy which he was just entering upon," he turned his eyes from the baseness of the churl who had excited his spirit of vengeance, to the

goodness of that God who had prevented it, and so broke forth into the doxology, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who has kept me this day from shedding blood, and from avenging myself with my own hand." The moral of Mr. Taylor's play of the *Fool's Revenge* is expressed in the Fool's cry towards its close,—

"I would have grasp'd Heaven's vengeance, and have drawn  
The bolt on my own head."

Milton's Satan has a like tale to tell, where he soliloquizes that

"Revenge, at first though sweet,  
Bitter ere long, back on itself recoils."

Again and again in various of his works the late Lord Lytton was strenuous in writing down a cherished spirit of vindictiveness. His Maltravers tells Cæsarini, there are injuries so great, that they defy revenge: "Let us alike, since we are alike injured, trust our cause to Him who reads all hearts, and, better than we can do, measures both crime and its excuses. . . . Let us rather seek to be the judges of ourselves, than the executioners of another." In almost his latest fiction he speaks of "the devil's grand luxury, Revenge,"—and of man's mimetic folly in adding evil to evil, to retort on the man who wrongs, or even on "the Arch-Invisible who afflicts you." Of all our passions, is not Revenge, he asks, the one into which enters with most zest, a devil? For what is a devil?—A being whose sole work on earth, as this author defines it, is some revenge on God.

### III.

#### *HEAVINESS FOR A NIGHT, JOY IN THE MORNING.*

PSALM xxx. 5.

**H**EAVINESS may endure for a night ; and the night may be in winter, mid-winter, when the nights are long. But the longest night has its limit. The profoundest darkness has its appointed term, and then day breaks, and the shadows flee away. Gladness revives with the dawn. Joy cometh in the morning. Though it tarry, wait for it ; it will surely come, though it seem to tarry.

“ *Schon verleschen sind die Stunden,  
Hingeschwunden Schmerz und Glück ;  
Fühl' es ver ! Du wirst gesunden ;  
Traue neuem Tagesblick.* ” \*

When the Light of the World was about to be withdrawn from the children of light, they were told that they should be sorrowful, but their sorrow should be turned into joy. “ And ye now therefore have sorrow : but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice.” Rejoice with the rising of the bright and morning star.

Often it is keenly felt to be darkest and dreariest just

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\* Which lines from Goethe have been thus Englished by that master of graceful translation, Mr. Theodore Martin :

“ See, the hours of night have vanished,  
Joy and grief have passed away ;  
Wake ! rejoice ! thy pain is banished,  
Trust the new advancing day.”



before daybreak.\* As Pandulph words it,—

“Evils, that take leave,  
On their departure most of all show evil.”

The shortest day was just past, and the winter nights were still at their longest, and Germany was preparing for a gloomy observance of Christmas in 1812, all hope of deliverance, or even of alleviation, from the distresses of French oppression seeming to be at an end ; when, as a Hamburgh citizen notes the fact, on the 24th of December, to the glad surprise of all, there was a bulletin published which confirmed beyond all possibility of doubt the tidings, hitherto rumoured only, and incredulously slighted, of the “total annihilation of the French host.” A miracle had been wrought, the biographer of Frederick Perthes writes, “and a star of hope had appeared which rekindled life and spirit in every oppressed heart. Such a Christmas Eve was kept in Hamburgh as had not been known for many a long year.” So with Cowper’s homely moral—

“Beware of desperate steps. The darkest day,  
Live till to-morrow, will have passed away.”

Even in 1808, so once sanguine a Liberal as Sir James Mackintosh, dismayed at the aspect of Europe, had ventured to “not despair of the fortunes of human race ;” but was constrained to own that the moral days and nights of those mighty revolutions had not yet been measured by human intellect ; and to ask, who could tell how long that fearful night might be before the dawn of a brighter morrow. The race of man might

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\* The first verse of Mr. Kingsley’s kind of battle hymn, as it has been called, of Christian Socialism, “The Day of the Lord,” ends,—

“The night is darkest before the morn ;  
When the pain is sorest the child is born,  
And the Day of the Lord is at hand.”

reach the promised land ; but he could see no assurance that the existing generation would not perish in the wilderness. The cheeriest could at times do little more than adopt Kent's patient philosophy—

“Fortune, good night ; smile once more ; turn thy wheel.”

The more despondently speculative would find at best a spokesman in Brutus :—

“Oh that a man might know  
The end of this day's business, ere it come !  
But it sufficeth, that the day will end,  
And then the end is known.”

Sir Walter Scott, journalizing day by day, when days were at the darkest with him, not only his daily cares and crosses but his night thoughts, refers on one occasion to Susannah in *Tristram Shandy*, thinking death is best met in bed ; and he adds, “I am sure trouble and vexation are not. The watches of the night press wearily when disturbed by fruitless regrets and disagreeable anticipations. But let it pass.

“Well, Goodman Time, or blunt, or keen,  
Move thou quick, or take thy leisure,  
Longest day will have its e'en,  
Weariest life but treads a measure.”

Come ! exclaims Byron's Doge of Venice : “The hour may be a hard one, but 'twill end.” Some kind of end, good or bad, everything earthly has, and must have. Cleve's haggard craftsmen, in Mr. Browning's play,

“Starve now, and will lie down at night to starve,  
Sure of a like to-morrow—but as sure  
Of a most unlike morrow-after-that,  
Since end things must, end howsoe'er things may.”

*Beatus ille* whose hope, and whose prayer, is the Psalmist's, “O let me hear Thy lovingkindness betimes in the morning, for in Thee is my trust.” There is a prologue in one of Scott's poems, of perils by waters, in which we

hear the elder Leader's calm reply, in steady accents given, "In man's most dark extremity, oft succour dawns from Heaven." The closing stanza of Burns's *Welcome home to Nithsdale* is pitched in the same key :—

"Though stars in skies may disappear, and angry tempests gather,  
The happy hour may soon be near that brings us pleasant weather ;  
The weary night of care and grief may have a joyful morrow :  
So dawning day has brought relief—Farewell our night of sorrow."

We read of Charles I., and his first night at Carisbrook Castle, that "his terrors were gradually appeased," when, next morning, on rising, he contemplated from the windows of his prison the charming view which the sea and land presented from that spot, and had breathed the inspiriting air of dawn. Scott tells us of the Master of Ravenswood at Wolf's Crag, how his agitations of the previous night found a composing and sedative influence in the morning that dispelled the shades of darkness, and was favourable to calm reflection.\* There is nothing more strange, but nothing more certain, Mr. Disraeli affirms, than the different influences which the seasons of night and day exercise upon the moods of our minds. "Him whom the moon sends to bed with a head full of misty meaning, the sun will summon in the morning with a brain clear and lucid as his beam. Twilight makes us pensive ; Aurora is the goddess of activity. Despair curses at midnight : Hope blesses at noon." Prospero's words in the *Tempest* admit of present adaptation :

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\* At a later crisis in the sombre narrative, we read how old Caleb Balderstone thought that the morning, for which he longed, would never dawn ; "but time, whose course rolls with equal current, however it may seem more rapid or more slow to mortal apprehension, brought the dawn at last, and spread a ruddy light on the broad verge of the glittering ocean."

“And as the morning steals upon the night,  
Melting the darkness, so their rising senses  
Begin to chase the ignorant fumes that mantle  
Their clearer reason.”

Mr. Trollope cautions us, in behalf of one of his heroes, that the character of a man is not to be judged from the reveries and vagaries of his solitary hours in the dark : “I beg, therefore, that Mr. Belton may be regarded and criticised in accordance with his conduct on the following morning.” It is the exception with wretchedness so exceptional as that of Roderick, the last of the Goths, to whom, after “oh, what a night of waking horrors !” nor when morning came

“Did the realities of light and day  
Bring aught of comfort.”

The exception proves the rule. And the rule holds good, especially of the young. Of one of the pleasantest of her young people, always pleasant Miss Austen observes, that to youth and natural cheerfulness like *hers*, though under temporary gloom at night, the return of day will hardly fail to bring return of spirits. The youth and cheerfulness of morning, says this author, are in happy analogy, and of powerful operation ; and if the distress be not poignant enough to keep the eyes unclosed, they will be sure to open to sensations of softened pain and brighter hope.

“Fair unto all men, shining Morning, seems  
Thy face serene when a new day unrolls,  
And all old sights and long-endured doles  
Seem fresh and bearable in thy bright beams.”

Contrasting night thoughts and sensations with morning ones, the American Professor at the Breakfast-table says of “our old mother Nature,” that when she follows us upstairs to our beds in her suit of black velvet and diamonds, every creak of her sandalled shoon and every

whisper of her lips is full of mystery and fear ; but she has pleasant and cheery tones enough for us when she comes in her dress of blue and gold over the eastern hill-tops. Oft, in the night, in imagining some fear, how easy (as Theseus has it) is a bush supposed a bear ! But early sunshine has a spell to *changer tout cela*. Madame de Staël's Oswald shuts himself up in his room, his first night in the capital of Christendom, a prey to dejection : "Oswald awoke in Rome. The dazzling sun of Italy met his first gaze, and his soul was penetrated with sensations of love and gratitude to that Heaven which seemed to smile on him in those glorious beams." Heaviness had endured for the night, but joy was first comer with the early morning. One of Mr. Dickens's autobiographic heroes opens a chapter with the words, "Morning made a considerable difference\* in my general prospect of Life, and brightened it so much that it scarcely seemed the same." With morning the vexed question of the laureate's Two Voices takes another form altogether,—as the vexed questioner arises and releases the casement, and the light grows "with freshness in the dawning east ;" and by the time he is in the fields, Nature's living motion lends "the pulse of hope to discontent ;" he wonders at the bounteous hours, the slow result of winter showers : you scarce could see the grass for flowers.

"I wondered, while I paced along :  
The woods were filled so full with song,  
There seemed no room for sense of wrong."

Insomuch that, possessed with the joy that had thus dawned with day, he marvelled how the mind was

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\* Cowper tells us, of the effect of his brother's visit to him in July, 1764, that he rose the next morning a new creature—a thousand delirious delusions dispersed.



brought to anchor by one gloomy thought,—as his, so signally, yestreen.

“The morning comes, of health so prodigal,  
I feel that health must on my being beam;  
And the blue sky absorbs each dreary dream.  
The flowers invite me to a festival.”

There is an influence in the light of morning that tends, says Hawthorne, to rectify whatever errors of fancy, or even of judgment, we may have taken up during the sun's decline, or among the shadows of the night, or in the less wholesome glow of moonshine. The common experience is that of the poet of the Three Gates—

“Then, at morn, methinks the moan parted with the parting gloom.  
And a softer, happier tone breathed around thy quiet room.”

Cheerily! cheerily! is Barry Cornwall's refrain—there is still a spot of green whence the heavens may be seen.  
And

“Let us never greet despair,  
While the little spot is there;  
For Winter brighteneth into May,  
And sullen Night to sunny Day;  
So cheerily, cheerily!”

The long lane has its turning, the longest day its night. Be it a long day of toil, for one that has to bear the burden and heat of it, and therefore looks on wistfully for the cool and the repose of eventide; or be it a moonless, starless night of prolonged suffering, *dabit Deus his quoque finem*.

“Be the day never so long,  
At length cometh even-song.”

So saith the ancient rhyme. And then eve saddens into night. And then—“Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman saith, The morning cometh.”

“Receive what cheer you may,  
The night is long that never finds the day.”

#### IV.

#### *CAMP FESTIVITIES AND MARTIAL BRAG.*

I KINGS xx. 11 ; I SAMUEL xxx. 16, 17.

THE king of Israel proved himself a match for the king of Syria in words, as well as in action, when, before defeating him with great slaughter, he gave this reply to Benhadad's arrogant presumption of an easy triumph: "Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off." Benhadad was drinking, he and the kings in the pavilions, when this message reached him; and at once he bade his forces set themselves in array against the city he assumed to be a taken city. And they did so. The hours wore away; and at noon Benhadad was drinking himself drunk in the pavilions, he and the kings, the thirty and two kings that helped him. Was a detachment of the enemy in sight? Whether they be come out for peace or for war, take them alive. But all at once all was confusion, and the Syrians fled, and Israel pursued them, and Benhadad escaped on horseback all in hot haste, and the king of Israel smote his horses and chariots, and slew the Syrians with a great slaughter. The king of Syria had feasted and tiddled with reckless bravado up to the last moment; and no doubt he was assured enough of a signal victory to prepare before hand a camp banquet to celebrate it the moment it should be won. Camp banquets, however, are liable to sudden collapse, in all their stages. David came upon the Amalekites when they were "eating and drinking, and dancing, because of all the great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the

land of Judah. And David smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day ; . . . and David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away." The eating and drinking and dancing were as inopportune with them as with the worldlings before the flood, when the flood came and swept them all away. Benhadad's brag was in effect, as in volume and force of delivery, an asinine bray. His tall talk was all talk. He should have postponed both boast and banquet. In respect of both, even so poor a creature as Ahab had him on the hip. Benhadad's brag was made the anvil for Ahab's wit ; and the banquet may have had a good deal to do with the brag.

When Pausanias, after the battle of Plataea, took possession of the tent of Mardonius, which had formerly been that of Xerxes, he directed the oriental slaves who had escaped the massacre to prepare a banquet after the fashion of the Persians, and as if served to Mardonius. His object was to contrast this gorgeous feast with the Spartan repast that was to be served at the same time ; but he must have relished also the irony of fate in thus disposing of the materials of luxury, designed to commemorate conquest, and applied in the event to celebrate defeat. He was not the man to have forgotten the marble which the Persians brought with them to Marathon, to be erected into a trophy of the victory they counted upon, and which was, at a later period, wrought by Phidias into a statue of Nemesis. Upon the taking of Pompey's camp at Pharsalia, there was what Plutarch calls a spectacle which showed in strong colours the vanity and presumption of Pompey's troops—all the tents were crowned with myrtle ; the couches were strewn with flowers, the tables covered with goblets, and flagons of wine set out. "To such a

degree had their vain hopes corrupted them, and with such an insensate confidence they took the field." In a like spirit the old biographer comments on the presumption of Pyrrhus when attacking Lacedæmon—the contemptuous idea he had conceived of it being the principal thing that saved the city ; for, assuming that he must needs prove irresistible, he ordered his tents to be pitched, and sat quietly down, while the house of his ally Cleonymus was duly adorned and prepared for a festal supper to be enjoyed with Pyrrhus that evening.

After the battle of Pollentia we see the captive wife of Alaric, who had impatiently claimed his promise of Roman jewels and patrician handmaids, reduced to implore the mercy of the insulting foe. Claudian pictures her an arrogantly exacting petitioner, before the battle :—

“Demens Ausonidum gemmata monilia matrum,  
Romanasque altâ famulas cervice petebat.”

History offers many such side-scenes as that of Clodion encamped in the plains of Artois, and celebrating, “with vain and ostentatious security,” a nuptial feast that was interrupted by the unexpected and unwelcome presence of Ætius, who had passed the Somme at the head of his light cavalry ; when the tables, which had been spread under the shelter of a hill, alongside the banks of a pleasant stream, were rudely overturned ; the Franks were “oppressed,” in Gibbon’s phrase, not to say suppressed, before they could recover their arms or their ranks, and their loaded wagons afforded a rich booty, besides what was ready to hand, and to mouth, on the festal board.

Against Belisarius advanced the Mirrhanes of Persia, with forty thousand of his best troops ; and with all

becoming emphasis he signified the day and the hour on which the citizens of Dura should prepare a bath for his refreshment after the toils of victory. Could he be said to be reckoning without his host, with such a host as those forty thousand elect? But host, like *hostis*, admits of divers and diverse meanings; and he *was* reckoning without Belisarius.

At Bannockburn was taken prisoner by Bruce one Baston, a Carmelite friar, and by repute an excellent poet, who had been commanded by Edward II. to accompany the English army, that he might immortalize the expected triumph of his master. The appropriate ransom for him demanded by Bruce was, that he should celebrate the victory of the Scots instead—a task which he accomplished in a composition said to remain as an extraordinary relic of the Leonine, or rhyming hexameters. Edward's premature prevision is of the kind the Emperor Ferdinand II. indulged in, when, deeming himself absolutely sure of his son's election by the diet, he let the imperial laureate not only write but print a congratulatory ode; whereas, to his surprise and confusion, the diet, instead of unequivocal submission, met him with remonstrance and reproach and a list of insufferable grievances.

Of Hohenlo's attack upon the city of Bois-le-duc, in 1585, Mr. Motley tells us, that "very brutally, foolishly, and characteristically, he had promised his followers the sacking of the city as soon as it should be taken"—and how they accordingly set about the sacking before it was taken, and with what unlooked-for result. With deep regret the same historian has elsewhere to admit, that not only the reckless Hohenlo, but the all-accomplished Sainte Aldegonde, committed the gravest error; both of them, in the instant of presumed triumph, giving way to puerile exultation. And he relates how



both these commanders, "with a celerity as censurable as it seems incredible," sprang into the first barge that floated across the dyke, now pierced (at the action on the Kowenstyn, during the great siege of Antwerp), in order that they might, in person, carry the news of the victory to Antwerp, and set all the bells ringing and the bonfires blazing; and how, while the conquerors were thus gone to enjoy their triumph, the conquered, so far from being as yet disposed to accept their defeat, were even ignorant that they were defeated. A magnificent banquet, however, was duly spread in the town-house to greet the exultant Hohenlo; and he, "placed on high at the head of the banquet-table, assumed the very god of war." He drained huge goblets to the health of Antwerp's fairest dames who sat beside him and near him; and as he drank and feasted, the trumpet, kettle-drum, and cymbal, and merry peal of bells without, did honour to his feat. "So gay and gallant was the victor, that he announced another banquet for the following day, still further to celebrate the happy release of Antwerp, and invited the fair ladies around him again to grace the board." Nevertheless, the gentlewoman next to him sighed forth a misgiving that the morrow would scarcely be so joyous as the present day had been, and could not refrain from expressing her earnest apprehensions that the triumph was premature. Hardly had she spoken, the story goes, when sinister sounds were heard in the streets: the first few stragglers, survivors of the deadly fight, had arrived with the fatal news that all was lost, the dyke regained, the Spaniards victorious, the whole band of patriots cut to pieces. "A few frightfully wounded and dying sufferers were brought into the banqueting-hall. Hohenlo sprang from the feast—interrupted in so ghastly a manner—pursued by shouts and hisses." No wonder that howls of execration saluted

him outside, and that he was obliged to conceal himself for a time, to escape the fury of the populace.

Hearty in its dry way is the chuckle Anthony Wood enjoys in one passage of his Diary about the "parliament soldiers" and their discomfiture at Oxford in 1645: "On the day before some of the said rebels . . . had been propping for venison in Thame park, I think, and one or two pasties of it were made, and newly put into the oven before the cavaliers entered into the house. But so it was that none of the said rebels were left at eleven of the clock to eat the same pasties," which fell into other hands and were appreciated accordingly.

Colonel Rigby's pride is well said to have had a dramatic fall when his mortar was captured by the garrison, on the very day on which he had invited his friends in the neighbourhood to come and see Lathom House fired.

When the British squadron, doomed to an ignominious repulse, appeared before Carthage, in 1741, the first step of the officers on board was to hold a Council of War, in order to settle the distribution of their future (paulo-post-future) booty; or, as Earl Stanhope suggests, according to the fable, sell the skin of the living bear.

At that triumph of Prussian discipline, as Mr. Carlyle accounts it, the battle of Mollwitz (1741), Neipperg and his Austrians, running out to rank themselves, cried, "Keep our soup hot a little, till we drive these fellows to destruction"—so contemptuous were the Imperialists of Prussian soldiering. But the soup got very cold indeed before *that* came about. And the opinion is one which old Fritz's historian assumes them to have renounced, ever since noon that day, for all remaining days and years.

General Hawley, before leaving Edinburgh to fight

(and lose) the battle of Falkirk, had erected two gibbets whereon to hang the Highlanders who should surrender to him in the victory he expected to achieve. After he returned, as Dr. Chambers says, "in a state so different from that of a conqueror," he had to use these conspicuous monuments of his folly for the hanging of some of his own men. At the time of the fatal reverse at Culloden, Lovat was residing at Gortuleg, and the house had, on the day of the battle, been the scene of "extensive culinary operations," for the purpose of celebrating by a feast the victory which it was expected the Prince would gain over his enemies. The French officer, on the Prince's side, who figures in Addison's *Freeholder*, amuses himself during the first day's march, after Preston, with considering what post he shall accept under James the Third, and absolutely determines not to be fobbed off with a garter ; passing by a noble country seat, of Whig ownership, he resolves to beg it, and pleases himself, the remainder of the day, with several alterations he intends to make in it. "We were indeed so confident of success, that I found most of my fellow-soldiers were taken up with imaginations of the same nature." There had like to have been, for instance, a duel between two subalterns upon a dispute, which of them should be governor of Portsmouth. In short, every man had cut out a place for himself in his own thoughts ; so that there might be reckoned up in that little army two or three lord treasurers, half a dozen secretaries of state, and at least a score of lords-justices in Eyre, for each side of Trent.

Napoleon in 1804, projecting and practically discounting his great invasion and subjugation of these isles, directed M. Denon, then at the head of the French mint, to prepare a medal in commemoration of the assured conquest. The die, being made accordingly,

was ready to be used in London, but owing, as Pitt's latest and ablest biographer remarks, to "the course of events," it was subsequently broken. Only three medals struck from it now remain, it is said; one of them in England, which is described as bearing on one side the usual head of the Emperor crowned with laurel, while on the reverse Hercules appears lifting up and crushing in his arms the monster Antæus; the motto being *Descende en Angleterre*, and below in smaller letters *Frappe à Londres en 1804*.

Five years later we have Soult printing a proclamation at his head-quarters, addressed to the generals of divisions, and to be published as an order of the day, in which he announced himself King of Portugal and Algarves, subject only to the approval of the Emperor, of which he entertained no doubt. The printer's ink had not had much more than about time to dry, when Wellington achieved the passage of the Douro, and effected so complete a surprise that, at four o'clock that day he quietly sat down to the dinner and table-service which had been prepared for Marshal Soult.

Such was the confidence which the people of Boston felt, in 1813, as to the success of Captain Lawrence of the Chesapeake, when starting to fight the Shannon, that they had prepared a public supper to greet the victors on their return, with their prisoners, to the harbour. This was the naval action which has been described as so rapid, that fifteen minutes only elapsed from the time the first gun was fired to that of the entire mastery of the Chesapeake by the British. Kihaya Bey and his five thousand Turks at Valtezza were so confident of success against the Greeks, that the soldiers had performed military dances in the streets of Tripolitza, before setting out, in assurance of antedated victory. The topsy-turvy reverses that occur on some of these



occasions are of a kind to resemble what Shakspeare's Capulet piteously describes :—

“All things that we ordainèd festival,  
Turn from their office to black funeral:  
Our instruments, to melancholy bells, . . .  
And all things change them to the contrary.”

—o—

## V.

### *FATAL PROSPERITY.*

PROVERBS i. 32.

PROSPERITY, in perhaps a quite equal degree with adversity, is a test of character ; tries it, tempts it, and is very often too much for it. “The prosperity of fools shall destroy them.” And the prosperity of those who until they became too prosperous were accounted wise too often brings out the folly that underlay the wisdom, and the weed-like growth of folly chokes the wisdom, so that it becometh unfruitful, and here again prosperity is fatal.

Lord Macaulay's highly finished portrait of Charles Montague, whose career had been, till fortune turned, more splendidly and uninterruptedly successful than that of any other member of the House of Commons, since the House of Commons had begun to exist, includes this characteristic trait,—that with all his ability, he had not the wisdom to avert, by suavity and moderation, that curse, the inseparable concomitant of prosperity and glory, which the ancients personified under the name of Nemesis. “His head, strong for all the purposes of debate and arithmetical calculation [as First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer], was weak against the intoxicating influence of success



and fame." He became proud even to insolence. And as great wealth, suddenly acquired, is not often enjoyed with moderation, dignity, and good taste, there may have been some ground for the wild stories told against him, by the "crowd of libellers who assailed him with much more than political hatred, laying to his charge boundless rapacity and corruption ; to say nothing of the rash and arrogant phrases that were imputed to him, and perhaps invented for him."\* Scott illustrates in the person of Martin Waldeck how little mortals can foresee the effect of sudden prosperity on their own disposition : the evil propensities in his nature, which poverty had checked and repressed, ripened and bore their unhallowed fruit under the influence of temptation and the means of indulgence. "As deep calls unto deep, one bad passion awakened another ;—the fiend of avarice invoked that of pride, and pride was to be supported by cruelty and oppression." Waldeck's character, always bold and daring, was thus rendered harsh and assuming by prosperity, and he soon became odious accordingly to all ranks, and destruction was his doom, Rousseau impressively says that "Celui que sa puissance met au-dessus de l'homme doit être au-dessus des faiblesses de l'humanité, sans quoi cet excès de force ne servira qu'à le mettre en effet au-dessous des autres et de ce qu'il eût été lui-même s'il fût resté leur égal." When Cyrus had annexed to his dominions the great and rich province of Babylon, he seems to have become, on the showing of Herodotus, intoxicated with success ; the measure of his prosperity

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\* In a later chapter of his *History*, Macaulay contrasts Somers with Montague under the test of prosperity. "One of the most severe trials to which the head and heart of man can be put is great and rapid elevation. To that trial both Montague and Somers were put. It was too much for Montague. But Somers was found equal to it."—Macaulay, *History of England*, ch. xxv.

was full to the brim, and it now began to run over in insolent self-confidence. From the time of the battle of Plataea a remarkable change was noted in Pausanias : glory had made him arrogant, and sudden luxury ostentatious ; the inscription he caused to be graven on a golden tripod claimed as exclusively his own the conquest of the barbarians. Of course Plutarch is as free to point a moral from Romulus as from Pyrrhus or Sylla ; of Romulus accordingly he tells us, that after the last of his wars he seemed over-exalted by his exploits, dropping his previous affability, and assuming the monarch to an offensive degree. Pyrrhus is similarly described as elated with prosperity, and carrying matters with a high hand. " This was not the conduct which he had observed at first ; for then he was gracious and affable to an extreme," whereas now he turned from a popular prince into a tyrant. In the case of Sylla, Plutarch speaks of him as bearing prosperity with great moderation at the beginning. *Si sic semper !* But the eventual change in him " could not but cast a blemish upon power "—as though the effect of it were a malignantly constant quantity, *quod semper, quod ubique, quod in omnibus demonstrandum est* ; for, " on his account it was believed that high honours and fortunes will not suffer men's manners to remain in their original simplicity, but that the result is insolence, arrogance, and inhumanity." Whether power does really produce such a change of disposition, or whether it only displays the native badness of the heart, is a vexed question which Plutarch refers to another section of authorship, or defers to a more convenient season. But his opinion is perhaps indicated in the Life of Aratus, when he says of the Philip against whom that patriot had to contend, " He was carried so high by the tide of prosperity, as to discover many disorderly passions. The native badness of

his disposition broke through the veil he had worn over it, and by degrees his real character appeared." Dr. Thomas Brown duly discusses the metaphysical argument against the identity of the mind, which some have drawn from the occasional striking contrasts of character in the same individual at different periods of life, or when, by great changes of fortune, he may have been placed suddenly in circumstances remarkably different. Gibbon describes the Emperor Carus, who before his elevation was in esteem for virtue and worth, as allowing his austere temper to degenerate into moroseness and cruelty ; and Constantine, who had so long inspired his subjects with love, as "degenerating into a cruel and dissolute monarch, corrupted by fortune, or raised by conquest above the necessity of dissimulation." Maximus the philosopher, the same historian describes as insensibly corrupted by his position at the court of Julian : "his dress became more splendid, his demeanour more lofty," and a "very scandalous" acquisition of wealth was imputed to him. Gratian, among the Emperors, is another of Gibbon's warning examples ; while upon Theodosius he has this "singular commendation" to pass, that his virtues seemed always to expand with his fortune, the season of his prosperity being that of his moderation. Such a history as that of Suetonius, which gives a succession of absolute princes, Addison takes to be an unanswerable argument against despotic power. Look, he says, into that historian, or into any series of absolute princes, how many tyrants must you read through before you come at one that is supportable. But this is not all, the Spectator goes on to say : an honest private man often grows cruel and abandoned when converted into an absolute prince ; for, give a man power of doing what he pleases with impunity, you extinguish his fear and consequently overturn in him

one of the pillars of morality. "This too we find confirmed by matter of fact. How many hopeful heirs-apparent \* to great empires, when in the possession of them, have become such monsters of lust and cruelty as are a reproach to human nature !" Vertigo, in Lord Lytton's *Siege of Constantinople*, draws sweeping conclusions on the verdict of experience and history :

" Alas, that in this world 'tis ever so !

For men might be as gods, if it were not  
That greed of power goes mad from power got.

Who stands upon the pinnacle, as 'twere,  
Of Greatness,—seeing, hearing, everywhere,  
About himself the dazzling orb spin round,  
Turns dizzy at the sight and at the sound,  
And tumbles from the top to the abyss.

Of all high places this the danger is :—

That those who stand there needs must gaze beneath,  
Till they were desperate ; being wooed to death  
By depth."

An Old Man essayist quotes the old saying, as old as Aristotle, and older, that those who rise suddenly to wealth and rank are not such good masters as those who have them by a long line of ancestors. "In my own experience I never yet knew a man who had raised himself in the world, or, if you like, had been raised more by lucky circumstances than by his own merit, who was not spoiled by it." The story of Nicolo de Rienzi has a standard moral on the effect of power. Singular, as Petrarch asserts in the *Pentameron* of Landor, was the prudence that last of the tribunes manifested at first ; while his modesty, his piety, his calm severity, his unbiassed justice, won to him the affections of every good

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\* Mr. Tennyson has this parenthetic simile in *Idylls of the King* :

" As sons of kings, loving in pupilage,  
Have turn'd to tyrants when they came to power."

VIVIEN.



citizen. He might have become the master of Italy, had he continued the master of himself; but he "allowed the weakest of the passions to run away with him: he fancied he could not inebriate himself soon enough with the intemperance of power." His best apologist is free to aver that the calmness, the sagacity, the sanctitude of Rienzi, in the ascent to his elevation, rendered him only the more detestable for his abuse of power. Surely the man was mad, Boccaccio charitably suggests. And his companion replies, that men often give the hand to the madness that seizes them. Rienzi, he takes it, yielded to pride and luxury; behind them came jealousy and distrust: fear followed these, and cruelty followed fear:—then the intellects sought the subterfuge that bewildered them; and an ignoble flight was precluded by an ignominious death.

There is Masaniello again—whose sudden and giddy elevation was aided by special circumstances therewith co-operant, to turn his brain, and who all too soon became capricious, absurd, and cruel, though cruelty is affirmed to have been a vice seemingly foreign to his disposition. But was it not seemingly foreign to that of Nero himself, once upon a time? A philosophical inquirer observes of that emperor, that in early youth, a cultivator of the softest arts, and no cause of suspicion and terror yet maddening his restless imagination, he was doubtless sincere when, the sentence on a criminal being brought to him to sign, he exclaimed, piteously, *Vellem nascere literas!*—"Would to Heaven that I had not learned to write!" But the same susceptibility to immediate influences which, when fresh from the contemplation of serene and harmless images, made him impulsively merciful, subjugated him to sensual pleasures, until his fears were worked upon by conscious enervation and depravity, and thus "the voluptuous trifler was



scared into the relentless butcher." Racine's Albine can say of Nero, ere yet his potentiality of wickedness has asserted itself in all or any of its real breadth and depth and length and height,—

"Depuis trois ans entiers qu'a-t-il dit, qu'a-t-il fait  
Qui ne promette à Rome un empereur parfait ?  
Rome, depuis trois ans par ses soins gouvernée,  
Au temps de ses consuls croit être retournée :  
Il la gouverne en père. Enfin, Néron naissant  
A toutes les vertus d'Auguste vieillissant."

That is in the first act of the tragedy of *Britannicus*. But tragedies have their fourth and fifth acts, and by the time we near the end of the fourth act of *this* tragedy, even a French one, true to the rule of unity of time, mark the change. Burrhus is now the speaker, and to Nero he speaks :

"Ah ! des vos premiers ans l'heureuse expérience  
Vous fait-elle, seigneur, haïr votre innocence ?  
. . . Quel changement, oh dieux !  
Le sang le plus abject vous était précieux.  
Un jour, il m'en souvient, le sénat équitable  
Vous pressait de souscrire à la mort d'un coupable ;  
Vous resistiez, seigneur, à leur sévérité ;  
Votre cœur s'accusait de trop de cruauté ;  
Et plaignant les malheurs attachés à l'empire,  
Je voudrais, disiez-vous, ne savoir pas écrire."

Marat boasts in his memoirs that as a boy he could not bear the sight of any ill-treatment of any of his fellow-creatures, just as the young man Robespierre had a young Nero-like horror of blood-shedding ; or as Couthon won all hearts by his gentle melancholy, though seeming to live only for his wife and child. "The inhabitants of St. Amand," says Lamartine, "little suspected the future rôle of Couthon : no blood was yet visible in his dreams." Of Lebon, too, like Robespierre a native of Arras, the historian of the Girondins has this to say, that after acquiring in obscurity the name of a man of worth, in

the day of his power,—and it was the power of darkness,—he made himself notorious for the pitilessness of his proscriptions. “Blood, of which he had had a horror, became as water in his eyes.” He seemed to repent of his sometime humanity, as of a blameworthy weakness. Of Barère it is that Macaulay remarks, in perhaps the most scathing and relentless of all his essays, that a man who, having been blessed by nature with a bland disposition, gradually brings himself to inflict misery on his fellow-creatures with indifference, with satisfaction, and at length with a hideous rapture, deserves to be regarded as a portent of wickedness. Barère he describes as tasting blood, and feeling no loathing; tasting it again, and liking it well; cruelty becoming with him, first a habit, then a passion, and at last a madness: so complete and rapid was the degeneracy of his nature, that, within a very few months after the time when he had passed for a good-natured man, he had brought himself to look on the despair and misery of his fellow-creatures with a glee resembling that of the fiends whom Dante saw watching the pool of seething pitch in Malebolge. As Nero, so Commodus, among the Cæsars, is a type for all time of depraved development: he had, says Gibbon, displayed a generosity of sentiment which might perhaps have ripened into solid virtue. “Commodus was not, as he has been represented, a tiger born with an insatiate thirst of human blood.” But of depraved development the varieties and degrees are endless.

“While Norman Tancred in Salerno reigned,  
The title of a gracious prince he gained;  
Till turned a tyrant in his latter days,  
He lost the lustre of his former praise,  
And from the bright meridian where he stood,  
Descending, dipped his hands in lovers’ blood.”

Descending,—*facilis descensus*. Easy as lying, in Hamlet’s phrase, is the process of degradation, down, down

down to the *terminus ad quem*, when a man systematically hath left off to behave himself wisely and to do good.

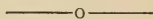
Caroline Montfort, in the last of the Caxton fictions, is aghast at the change alleged to have come over one she had seen in youth, when nothing about him foreboded "so fearful a corruption." "He might be vain, extravagant, selfish, false . . . but still the ruffian you paint, banded with common criminals, cannot be the same as the gay, dainty, perfumed, fair-faced adventurer" in question. Do we know ourselves, or what good or evil circumstances may bring from us? muses the author of *The Newcomes*. "Did Cain know, as he and his younger brother played round their mother's knee, that the little hand which caressed Abel should one day grow larger, and seize a brand to slay him? Thrice fortunate he, to whom circumstance is made easy: whom fate visits with gentle trial, and kindly Heaven keeps out of temptation." Even Zeluco, his author assures us, was not naturally cruel, but became so "in consequence of unlimited power." Penn pleads for Cromwell, in the imaginary conversation with Lord Peterborough, that whereas he was thought to have been a hypocrite for the sake of power, he was really sincere until power by degrees made him a hypocrite; whence the moral, how little then of it should be trusted to any man, when the wisest, and the bravest, and the calmest are thus perverted by it.

Swift is suggestive about the "known story of Colonel Tidcomb," who, while he continued a subaltern, was every day complaining against the pride, oppression, and hard treatment of colonels towards their officers; but who, in a minute after he had received his commission for a regiment, confessed to a friend with whom he was walking on the Mall, that the spirit of colonelship was coming fast upon him; which spirit is said to have daily increased

to the hour of his death. Paul Louis Courier says bitterly of Lariboissière, "I followed a General whom I had long known for a good man and a friend, and I believed him such for ever ; but he became a Count. What a metamorphosis ! The good man instantly disappeared, and of the friend I saw no more." "I could never have believed, but for this proof, how vast a difference there is between a man and a lord." Johnson used latterly to own of his diligent imitator, Dr. Hawkesworth, whom he was fond of, that, setting out a modest, humble man,—and originally in trade,—he was "one of the many whom success in the world had spoiled." Pope's Sir Balaam is a high-coloured representative man of the worst kind of spoiling—for Satan now is wiser than of yore, and tempts by making rich, not making poor—in the outset a plain good man, religious, punctual, frugal, and so forth, whose word would pass for more than he was worth ; in the outcome, secured by the demon who made his full descent in one abundant shower of cent. per cent. Not even the Holy Father is, as such, exempt from the historical law of depraved development, due to, at least ensuing upon, prosperity and place and power *in excelsis*. Bartolomeo Prignani, elected Pope in 1378, was in repute for piety as well as learning ; but the cardinals had not, says Sismondi, "calculated on the development of the passions which a sudden elevation sometimes gives," or on the degree of impatience, arrogance, and irritability of which man is capable, in his unexpected capacity of master, though in an inferior situation he had appeared gentle and modest. This was Urban VI. And what do we read in *Chronicles and Characters* of a later and more distinguished pontiff, erst the pauper priest, John Peter Carafa ? At his election, the whole world cried, "'Tis well, for he is worthy of the keys :"—simple, austere, men knew him, pure his name, and noted his virtues, so

that "worthier Pope there could not be." But as Pope, Paul IV. became a byword for luxurious living and sumptuous ostentation. The Venetian envoy Bernardo Navigero's *Relazione* has been pungently paraphrased :

"Good cheer he loves; and lustily he eats  
 And deep he drinks : right royal is his tone :  
 The mightiest monarchs of the world he treats  
 As clots of common dust beneath his throne :  
 His daily drink is butts of burning black  
 Fierce Naples wine, and cups of Malvoisie.  
 Methinks his belly is but a Bacchus' sack ;  
 And his least meal meats five-and-twenty be."



## VI.

### MALEVOLENT GESTICULATION.

PROVERBS vi. 13; x. 10.

IT is written of the "naughty person," the wicked man, who walketh with a froward mouth, that "he winketh with his eyes, he speaketh with his feet, he teacheth with his fingers,"—all by way of hinting, indicating, intimating, insinuating the malignant meaning that is in his heart, if not upon his lips ; for frowardness is in his heart, and he deviseth mischief continually, and by these aids and appliances of malevolent gesticulation he bringeth that mischief to pass. "He that winketh with the eye causeth sorrow." It is an apparent paraphrase of this we read in the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach: "He that winketh with the eyes worketh evil ; and he that knoweth him will depart from him."

One of the few prose essays contributed by Cowper to the *Connoisseur* concerns "a tell-tale of a very singular kind," Ned Trusty by name, who having some sense of his duty, hesitates a little in the breach of it ; having engaged never to utter a syllable, he must punctually



perform his promise ; but then he has the knack of insinuating by a nod, and a shrug well-timed, or seasonable leer, as much as others can convey in express terms : it is difficult, in short, to determine whether he is more to be admired for his resolution in not mentioning, or his ingenuity in disclosing a secret. Mistress Lilius, in Scott's *Abbot*, presents herself before her mistress with all the exterior of one in possession of a momentous secret—the corners of her mouth turned down, her eyes raised up, her lips pressed as fast together as if they had been sewed up, to prevent her blabbing, and an air of prim mystical importance diffused over her whole person and demeanour, which seems to intimate, “I know something which I am resolved not to tell you.” In Swift's gallery of portraits of Malice always judging worst, he finds room, ample room, for some representative personages who do not

“trust their tongues alone,  
But speak a language of their own ;  
Can read a nod, a shrug, a look,  
Far better than a printed book ;  
Convey a libel in a frown,  
And wink a reputation down ;  
Or by the tossing of the fan  
Describe the lady and the man.”

When Porson's “friend,” in the imaginary dialogue, wishes to convey how entirely that scholar is gone to the dogs, he begins by hinting that his faculties are wearing fast away, that he is drinking harder than ever, and that although he once indeed had some Greek in his head,—“he then claps the forefinger to the side of his nose, turns his eye slowly upward, and looks compassionately and calmly.” Dr. Holmes describes two women, in one of his initial chapters, as looking each other in the eyes with subtle interchange of intelligence, such as belongs to their sex in virtue of its specialty ; talk without words

being half their conversation, just as it is all the conversation of the lower animals. There is an old lady in *Land at Last*, of whom we are told that she never compromised herself by outraging social decency in verbal attacks or disparaging remarks, but whose intimate friends had by a long experience been taught to thoroughly appreciate, and readily translate, certain bits of facial pantomime which never varied; notably among them, the uplifted eyebrow of astonishment, the prolonged stare of "wonder at her insolence," the shoulder-shrug of "I don't understand such things," and the sniff of unmitigated disgust. La Bruyère sketches to the life, because from the life, one who "vient à ses fins sans se donner la peine d'ouvrir la bouche : on lui parle d'Eudoxe, il sourit ou il soupire : on l'interroge, on insiste, il ne répond rien, et il a raison ; il en a assez dit." For, as George Herbert says, in such a case,

"—— What more

Could poison, if it had a tongue, express?"

Shakspeare's Leontes is wrathfully disdainful of—

"The shrug, the hum, or ha; these pretty brands  
That calumny will use."

And what significant gesticulation is that described by Hubert, to King John, on the part of old men and bel-dames in the street, whose talk is dangerous, who shake their heads, and whisper one another in the ear, with a disproportionate accompaniment of "fearful action"—with wrinkling brows, with nods, and rolling eyes. Hamlet straitly enjoins his companions of the watch by night, on the platform at Elsinore, never by "ambiguous giving out" to betray his secret; never, "with arms encumbered thus, or this head-shake, or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase, as—*Well, well, we know;*—or, *We could an if we would;*—or, *If we list to speak;*—or, *There be, an if they might;*"—or any other such vague intimation

of restrained knowledge, to pique curiosity and to suggest a mystery. It is because Othello knows, or thinks he knows, Iago to be full of love and honesty, and one that weighs his words before he gives them breath, that those broken ejaculations and fragmentary utterances of his about Desdemona so disquiet him:

“Therefore these stops of thine fright me the more;  
For such things in a false disloyal knave  
Are tricks of custom,”

but presumably pregnant with import in honest, honest Iago, whose tactics resemble those of the wary wily schemers in Crabbe; “will now a hint convey, and then retire, and let the spark awake the lingering fire.” To apply the words of Byron’s Gabor, all this “is mere cozenage, or vile equivocation: you well know your doubts are certainties to all around you—your looks and voice,” and an eloquent one too, and full of matter. So with Knowles’s Ferrado, in *The Wife*, starting to “mix with the company, and point to them the eye of questioning remark: with looks speak sentences,”—look daggers, where he spoke none. Until she came to know better, Agnes Grey thought the elder Mrs. Bloomfield a kindly old body, disposed to be confidently confidential, though a main portion of her “confidences” appeared to consist in noddings and shakings of her head, and gesticulating with hands and eyes,—her half sentences being graphically eked out with “knowing winks” and the like effective symbolism of dumb show. Aurora Floyd, too, had her Mrs. Powell, the ensign’s widow, who murdered character without the utterance of one ugly word that could have told against her gentility, had it been repeated aloud in a crowded drawing-room. “She had only shrugged her shoulders, and lifted her straw-coloured eyebrows, and sighed, half-regretfully, half-deprecatingly; but she had blasted the character

of the woman she hated as shamefully as if she had uttered a libel too gross for Holywell Street." Whispered aloud, is Churchill's cue for a pungent parenthesis :

" Whispered aloud (for this we find  
A custom current with mankind,  
So loud to whisper, that each word  
May all around be plainly heard ;  
And Prudence, sure, would never miss  
A custom so contrived as this  
Her candour to secure, yet aim  
Sure death against another's fame)."

There are indirect insinuations which convey an assertion or an argument in its most incisive form ; and satire is held to be always most delicate, and often most cutting, when it is rather hinted than expressed.

Samuel Butler describes in *Hudibras* the proper language of cabals, where all a subtle statesman says—

" Is half in words, and half in face ;  
As Spaniards talk in dialogues  
Of head and shoulders, nods and shrugs ;  
Entrust it under solemn vows  
Of mum and silence and the rose,  
To be retailed again in whispers,  
For th' easy credulous to disperse."

So Chesterfield laughs at—but, *mille pardons*, my lord, as a man of bon ton, never laughed—the ridiculous importance of blockheads, whose " significant shrugs and insignificant whispers are very entertaining to a bystander." So in Thomson's *Castle of Indolence*,

" The puzzling sons of party next appeared,  
In dark cabals and nightly juntos met ;  
And now they whispered close, now shrugging reared  
The important shoulder ; then, as if to get  
New light, their twinkling eyes were inward set."

The Doctor Packthread of transatlantic story is noted among his clerical brethren for his mastery of



means whereby to serve his party and damage the opposing one; especially in spreading a convenient report, on necessary occasions, in any of those forms which do not assert, but which disseminate a slander quite as certainly as if they did; and thus he would whisper away a minister's orthodoxy by "innocent interrogations," or charitable hopes, or gentle sighs, or by "shakes of the head and liftings of the eyes at proper intervals in conversation, or lastly by *silence* when silence became the strongest as well as safest form of assertion." Against such sinister practice may Merlin's protest apply—

"You breathe but accusation vast and vague,  
Spleen-born, I think, and proofless. If you know,  
Set up the charge you know, to stand or fall!"

Or the lines in *Lara* about some who had seen they scarce knew what, but more than should have been:

"All was not well, they deemed—but where the wrong?  
Some knew perchance—but 'twere a tale too long;  
And such besides were too discreetly wise  
To more than hint their knowledge in surmise;  
But if they would—they could."

To the small wares and petty points of cunning enumerated by Bacon, Whately is for adding what he calls "a very hackneyed trick, which is yet wonderfully successful,"—the affecting a delicacy about mentioning particulars, and the hinting at what you "could" bring forward, only you do not wish to give offence. "We could give many cases to prove that such and such a medical system is all a delusion, and a piece of quackery; but we abstain, through tenderness for individuals, from bringing names before the Public.' Another clerical essayist remarks how easily an unfavourable "sough" may be got up in a rural district, by a man who combines caution with malignity; and all



in such a way that you cannot lay hold of the wary malignant or maligner. Spoken to in praise of an acquaintance, for example, he will reply, in a hesitating way, "Yes, he's rather a nice fellow; but——well, I don't want to say anything bad of any one." In this way he avoids committing himself, but has managed to convey a worse impression than by any definite charge he could have made against the man. Justly deprecated as one of the most irritating things in the world, and capable of being made one of the most insulting, is that obtrusive kind of reticence which parades itself, which makes mysteries and lets you see there are mysteries, which keeps silence and flaunts it in your face as an intentional silence, a silence as loud as words. If words are sharp arrows, this kind of dumbness—as exposed by an expositor of the art of reticence—is even sharper, and all the worse, because it puts it out of your power to complain; for you cannot bring into court a list of looks and shrugs, or make it a grievance that a man held his tongue while you raved. "This is a common form of tormenting, however, with reticent people who have a moral twist;" and, it may be added, with malicious people who have a cautious turn.

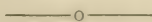
Mr. Disraeli lashes out against the high-bred folks who look affectedly confused when a scandalized name is mentioned, as if they could a tale unfold, if they were not convinced that the sense of propriety among all present is infinitely superior to their sense of curiosity. "Delicacy, my dear sir, delicacy!" says Mr. Dickens's man in blue, pulling up his neckerchief, and adjusting his coat cuffs, and nodding and frowning as if there were more behind, which he could say if he liked, but was bound in honour to suppress. The same author's Mrs. Nickleby is once at least presented to us in the act of nodding her head, and patting the back of her

daughter's hand cautiously, and looking as if she could tell something vastly important if she chose, but had self-denial, thank her stars! and wouldn't do it. Owen Meredith's Wanderer professes to

“ — know how tender friends of me  
Have talked with broken hint, and glance:  
The choicest flowers of calumny,  
That seem, like weeds, to spring from chance.”

With which he associates that small, small, imperceptible small talk, which cuts like powdered glass ground in Tophana—“none can tell where lurks the power the poison has.” With bitter expressiveness Byron asserted his large experience in the ways of malice—the highways and byways, the plain broad road and the crooked paths and winding lanes of it,—

“ From the loud roar of foaming calumny  
To the small whisper of the as paltry few,  
And subtler venom of the reptile crew,  
The Janus-glance of whose significant eye,  
Learning to lie with silence, would seem true,  
And without utterance, save the shrug or sigh,  
Deal round to happy fools its speechless obloquy.”



## VII.

### *SHOUTED OUT OF THE WORLD; OR, VALEDICTORY MALEDICTION.*

PROVERBS xi. 10.

THE exultant shout of relief at a man's death might almost wake the dead man. It is hideous to think of a choral symphony of voices, jubilant at a dead march, making a triumphal march of their own of it, making the welkin ring with huzzas at death's last feat, and welcoming it to the echo. For those tumultuous pæans have a vengeful curse in their every note. They mean malediction; and they say what they mean. “When

the wicked perish, there is shouting." The bad man dead and gone is such a good riddance. The multitude account it, for themselves, not for him, such a happy release.

The greatest of the greater prophets of the Old Testament indites the "triumphant insultation" of his country and his countrymen against the dead-and-gone king of Babylon, when that oppressor ceased, and the Lord broke the staff of the wicked and the sceptre of the rulers ; so that now the whole land was at rest, and quiet, and the voice of joyous singers alone disturbed that repose : yea, the fig-tree rejoiced against the dead king, and the cedars of Lebanon with them, saying, "Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us."

When Alexander Jannæus, desirous of a reconciliation with his people, asked them what he should do to make them quite content,—“Die !” was the response. It was the only way.

The death of Ethwald, in Joanna Baillie's tragedy, points the moral of the same bitter tale. Here are the closing lines of that drama, the purpose of which was to illustrate corrupt ambition as one of the passions most fatal when inordinately fostered and unscrupulously followed :

“——Through all the vexed land  
 Let every heart bound at the joyful tidings !  
 Thus from his frowning height the tyrant falls  
 Like a dark mountain, whose interior fires,  
 Raging in ceaseless tumult, have devoured  
 Its own foundations. Sunk in sudden ruin  
 To the tremendous gulf, in the vast void  
 No friendly rock rears its opposing head  
 To stay the dreadful crash. . . . The joyful hinds  
 Point to the traveller the hollow vale  
 Where once it stood.”

Memorable in the prison experiences of Herod

Agrippa was the arrival of news that the tyrant of Capreæ was dead : immediately on the death of Tiberius, Marsyas, Agrippa's faithful bond-slave, hastened to his master's dungeon, and communicated the joyful intelligence, saying in the Hebrew language, "The lion is dead." The centurion on guard heard the rejoicing, inquired as to the cause, ordered the royal prisoner's chains to be struck off, and invited him to supper. But more memorable was the exultation, widely felt and cruelly expressed, at Agrippa's own death—that loathsome death, so strange in its surroundings, of which a tale is told in the Acts of the Apostles. The inhabitants of Sebaste and Cæsarea, as we learn from Josephus, and particularly Herod's own soldiers, indulged in the most brutal rejoicings at his death—heaping his memory with reproaches, and submitting the statues of his young daughter to every sort of indignity and symbolical outrage. So with Sejanus and the mob of Rome—a mob greatly given to such explosions of hate, as in the case of Pompey's father, whose body they tore from the bier, at his funeral, and dragged it through the streets of the city. In his account of the death of the Emperor Maximin, Gibbon says : "It is easier to conceive than to describe the universal joy of the Roman world on the fall of the tyrant." Characteristic is the same historian's remark in reference to the death of Julian, and the effect of it upon Jovian : "The esteem of an enemy is most sincerely expressed by his fears ; and the degree of fear may be accurately measured by the joy with which he celebrates his deliverance." Witness the transports of Pope Innocent IV. at the death of the great Emperor Frederick, whereat his Holiness himself raised a song of triumph, addressed to all the prelates and all the nobles of the realm (the greater number of whom, however, seem, as Dean Milman says,

to have been insensible of the blessing): "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad," at this great deliverance. In the previous century, while there was the profoundest sorrow in Germany at the loss of that Emperor Henry whose wisdom and valour were compared with Solomon and David, yet, considering that "the annals of tyranny contain nothing more revolting than his cruelties to his Italian subjects," no wonder that at his death the cry of rejoicing broke forth from Calabria to Lombardy.

The death of the young French king, Francis II., husband of Mary Stuart, when announced in Scotland, occasioned "extraordinary exultation" on the part of the "ministers," who not only accounted it a great deliverance for them and for their country, but also a special judgment inflicted upon an infidel and stubborn prince. Ten years later, on the other hand, the news of the Regent Murray's assassination produced in France a paroxysm of joy, and was followed by active preparations to improve the event, in a highly practical way. Next year the hurried trial, condemnation, and death by hanging of the primate Hamilton, caused jubilant rejoicings among the Reformed party, lay and clerical; and this distich was affixed to the gallows on which he suffered:

*"Cresce diu felix arbor, semperque vireto  
Frondebis, qui nobis talia poma feras."*

When the "Huguenot Pope," Sixtus V., died, in 1590, the removal of one who had so little favoured the League, and who swayed so perceptibly, as one historian expresses it, in the direction of the hated Béarnese, was hailed as a matter of great rejoicing by the Spanish party in Rome, who bestowed as much ignominy upon his memory as if he had been a heretic; while in Paris his decease was celebrated with bonfires



and other marks of popular hilarity. The death of Richelieu is said to have been felt by France like the relief from a nightmare: from the king to the lowest rhymester of the *ruelles*, all joined in the burden of the couplets which proclaimed it—"Il est parti, il a plié bagage, Ce cardinal!" Not the partridges, moor-fowl, and hares apostrophized by Burns, by way of congratulation on the decease of such a crack shot as Tam Samson, could have exulted more effusively in their proclaimed deliverance:

" Rejoice, ye birring pairicks a';  
 Ye cootie moorcocks, crously crow ;  
 Ye maukins, cock your fud fu' braw,  
                   Withouten dread ;  
 Your mortal fae is now awa'—  
                   Tam Samson's dead !"

The Grand Monarque himself, when *he* died,—when it was positively known that the old king had ceased to breathe, why, the people are said to have gone half mad with joy. Voltaire was a curious observer of the *guin-guettes* erected along the St.-Denis Road on the day of the funeral, and in them he saw *le peuple ivre de vin et de joie de la mort de Louis XIV.* At the news of the violent death of the Czar Paul I., the whole city of St. Petersburg—army, nobles, and populace—rejoiced with one consent. Such were the transports of the Turks in Constantinople when the head of Ali Pacha was brought thither, and exposed at the gate of the Seraglio in a silver dish, that one would have supposed, says the historian, the whole mass of the Sultan's enemies had been destroyed by a single blow.

After the battle of Ligny, a rumour spread that Blucher, *le vieux diable*, as Napoleon commonly called him, was dead, as well-nigh the old marshal was; and the French emperor made the most of it in cheering the

hopes of his soldiers in the struggle that followed at Waterloo: to be able to assure them that the *vieux diable* was veritably *mort* was worth more than a squadron to the French side. So his Imperial Majesty seems to have gone about asserting the fact of that mortality, as persistently as Denis, the swearing trooper, in Mr. Reade's historical fiction, kept to that perennial phrase, *Le diable est mort*,—all in the style of Owen Meredith's stanzas of News, beginning, "News, news, news, my gossiping friends! I have wonderful news to tell . . . The Devil is dead," etc. There never yet was a time that had not its proclaimers and sometimes its believers in news too good to be true.

One of the most effective proofs suggested by Dr. Moore of the hatefulness of his "hero," Zeluco, is the fact that while that detested master languished between life and death, the mind of the patient himself was hardly more cruelly agitated between fear and hope than that of every slave, male and female, that belonged to him. So that when he was pronounced out of danger, the news produced a shock like that of electricity over his whole family and household. "A number of slaves who happened to be at work in the garden under the window of Zeluco's bedchamber, burst into a loud and uncontrollable howl of sorrow when his recovery was first announced to them." In an after chapter his physician mildly counsels a change of conduct towards his slaves; "for certainly that man is in a most miserable as well as dangerous situation, who lives among those who rejoice in his sickness, howl with despair at his recovery, and whose only hope of tranquillity lies in their own death or his." But Dr. Moore's hero was not given to ask any such advice, or take it.

There is hardly on record a more emphatic illustra-

tion of our subject than is afforded in history by the death of Robespierre. Ecstatic were the jubilations of men, women, and children, when that event became known for certain. In one of Landor's least-known Imaginary Conversations, a description occurs of a traveller's approach to Montreuil at the period in question, and seeing the ruined monastery near the town-gate covered with garlands, and the people in holiday attire. His carriage stops, and he asks, "What festival is this to-day?" The answer is from fifty voices, "The monster is dead!" Alison writes of the scene in the streets of Paris, while Robespierre was being taken to the scaffold, "The joy was universal; it almost approached to delirium." One woman, breaking from the crowd, addressed the doomed dictator, "Murderer of all my kindred! your agony fills me with joy." Present physical agony the wretched man was suffering, from that broken jaw, the bandage of which covered all his face but the forehead and one eye. The decree of the Convention, which declared him beyond the pale of the law, had been welcomed at daybreak by ten thousand prisoners who were thereby relieved from the prospect of instant death. All through France, "the passengers leapt from the public conveyances, embraced the bystanders, exclaiming, 'Rejoice, *mes amis*, Robespierre is no more; the tiger is dead!' Two hundred thousand captives in the prisons \* throughout the country were freed from

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\* Josephine Beauharnais was one of these; and in her Memoirs she has left a graphic record of her means of learning the great deliverance. She and Madame d'Aiguillon were leaning against the bars of their prison window, when they saw a poor woman of their acquaintance making a number of signs, which were quite unintelligible at first. The sign-maker kept holding up her gown (*robe*); and Josephine, seeing that she had some object in view, called out "Robe?" to which the answer was "Yes." She then lifted up a stone and put it in her lap, repeating the action until

the terror of death ; three hundred thousand trembling fugitives issued from their retreats, and embraced each other with frantic joy on the public roads." The epitaph designed for his tomb is significant : " Passant ! ne pleure point son sort ; Car s'il vivait, tu serais mort." Wordsworth, in his autobiographic poem, has this episode in the book devoted to his residence in France,—a parallel passage, in fact, to that already cited from Walter Savage Landor :

" Not far from that still ruin all the plain  
Lay spotted with a variegated crowd.  
Of vehicles and travellers. . . . I paused,  
Longing for skill to paint a scene so bright  
And cheerful ; but the foremost of the band  
As he approached, no salutation given  
In the familiar language of the day,  
Cried, ' Robespierre is dead ! '—nor was a doubt,  
After strict question, left within my mind,  
That he and his supporters all were fallen.

Great was my transport, deep my gratitude  
To everlasting Justice, by this fiat  
Made manifest. ' Come now, ye golden times,'  
Said I, forth-pouring on those open sands  
A hymn of triumph."

Josephine called out, " Pierre?" and a joyous affirmative was the reply. Then, joining the *pierre* to her *robe*, the woman eagerly imitated the motion of the guillotine, dancing about the while with an *abandon* of furious delight. " This singular pantomime awakened in our minds a vague hope that possibly Robespierre might be no more.

" At this moment, when we were vacillating between hope and fear, we heard a great noise in the corridor, and the terrible voice of our gaoler, who said to his dog, giving him a kick at the same time, ' Get along, you cursed Robespierre ! ' That coarse phrase at once taught us that we had nothing to fear, and that France was saved."—*Mém. de Josephine*, i., 253.



## VIII.

### SECRETS BLABBED AND SECRETS KEPT.

PROVERBS xi. 13.

THE Book of Proverbs stigmatizes again and again the incontinent babblers that cannot keep a secret. "A tale-bearer revealeth secrets; but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter." The difference is a sharply drawn one, the distinction a distinctly defined one, between fidelity and unfaithfulness, between the treacherous and the loyal. "The words of a tale-bearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly,"—piercing even, to apply New Testament diction, to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow. Therefore, "discover not a secret to another." "Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out; so, where there is no tale-bearer, the strife ceaseth." The Son of Sirach counsels us to rehearse not unto another that which has been confided to ourselves: "Whether it be friend or foe, talk not of other men's lives; and if thou canst without offence, reveal them not. . . . If thou hast heard a word, let it die with thee; and be bold, it will not burst thee." And last, not least, on the list of things of which we should be ashamed, he places the "iterating and speaking again that which thou hast heard; and revealing of secrets."

Horace's *Arcanique Fides prodiga, pellucidior vitro*, is a very unfaithful sort of Faith, a transparent infidel to Fidelity. *Est et fideli tuta silentio Merces*, he says, in another ode, with an emphatic veto (*vetabo*) on association with the blabber of sacred secrets. There is a Danish proverb, quoted in the Archbishop of Dublin's



book, which warns us well against relying too much on other men's silence, since there is no rarer gift than the capacity of keeping a secret: "Tell nothing to thy friend which thy enemy may not know." The Psalmist can scarcely give greater force to his picture of men far gone in wickedness and the practice of it, than by saying that they keep it secret, every man in the deep of his heart. Woman's weakness is intimated in the warning of the prophet Micah—but not until he has also cautioned against trusting in a friend of the other sex: "Keep the door of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom;" referring, be it remembered, to a time when a man's foes should be they of his own house. Portia, that woman well-reputed, Cato's daughter, pleading to be made sharer in her husband's secrets, appeals to the self-inflicted wound she can bear with patience; can bear that, "and not my husband's secrets?" "Tell me your counsels, I will not disclose them; I have made strong proof of my constancy," in that ugly gash afore-said; and the appeal makes Brutus promise that her bosom shall be sharer in all the secrets of his heart. But she finds a strain upon her when she comes to know all, and sighs forth in soliloquy,—

"O constancy, be strong upon my side!  
Set a huge mountain 'twixt my heart and tongue!  
I have a man's mind, but a woman's might.  
How hard it is for women to keep counsel!"

Harry Percy's wife is less successful in *her* appeal to be taken entirely into Hotspur's confidence: "Constant you are," he agrees, "but yet a woman; and for secrecy,—

"No lady closer; for I well believe,  
Thou wilt not utter what thou dost not know;  
And so far will I trust thee, gentle Kate!

*Lady Percy.* How! so far?

*Hotspur.*

Not an inch farther."

*Un secret*, says a saucy French writer, *tourmente plus une femme qu'une colique; et comme il est très-agréable de raconter, elle n'est pas longtemps malade*. Schleiermacher, on the other hand, deemed it sheer folly to say that women cannot be depended upon for silence. "I shall trust implicitly in yours," he told his Jette; "and I feel convinced that no fear would wring a secret from you that I had confided to you." It is not fear that is to be feared, however, in the common run of cases. The expert adviser in Crabbe's *Maid's Story* winds up her counsels to her "dear Martha" with the monition,—

"And one thing more—to free yourself from foes,  
Never a secret to your friend disclose;  
Secrets with girls, like loaded guns with boys,  
Are never valued till they make a noise;  
To show how trusted, they their power display;  
To show how worthy, they the trust betray:  
Like pence in children's pockets secrets lie  
In female bosoms—they must burn or fly."

If a fool knows a secret, he tells it because he is a fool; if a knave knows one, he tells it wherever it is, his interest to tell it. But women and young men—according to Lord Chesterfield's maxim—are very apt to tell what secrets they know, from the vanity of having been trusted. "Trust none of these, wherever you can help it." La Fontaine is impartial between the sexes:—

"Rien ne pèse tant qu'un secret:  
Le porter loin est difficile aux dames;  
Et je sais même sur ce fait  
Bon nombre d'hommes qui sont femmes."

La Bruyère holds a man to be more faithful to the secret of another than to his own; but a woman to keep her own secret much better than any one's else. Corneille's Léontine reproaches Eudoxe,

"Vous êtes fille, Eudoxe, et vous avez parlé:  
Vous n'avez pu savoir cette grande nouvelle

Sans la dire à Poreille à quelque âme infidèle,  
A qui grand secret a pesé comme à vous."

Miss Richland complains of Olivia, in Goldsmith's *Good-natured Man*, "Would you believe it, Garnet, I told her all my secrets, and yet the sly cheat concealed all this from me?" "And upon my word, madam," replies Garnet, "I don't much blame her; she was very loth to trust one with her secrets, that was so very bad at keeping her own." Mr. Creevy was one day told in strictest confidence by Sheridan, after dinner, when the ladies had left the room, of a fortune having just been left him. "Mrs. Sheridan and I," said he, "have made a solemn vow to each other to mention it to no one; and nothing induces me now to confide it to you, but the absolute conviction that Mrs. Sheridan is at this moment confiding it to Mrs. Creevy upstairs." Perhaps Richard Brinsley would have accepted as applicable to any woman the epigram which Coleridge penned against a particular one:—

"' She's secret as the grave, allow.'

' I do: I cannot doubt it.

But 'tis a grave with tombstone on,  
That tells you all about it.'"

When Don Abbondio, in Manzoni's *Promessi Sposi*, entreated Perpetua to be silent on a certain subject, she replied that there was no necessity for enjoining a thing so obvious and proper; but certain it is that the secret remained in the heart of the poor woman as new wine in an old cask, which ferments and bubbles, and if it does not send the bung into the air, works out in foam between the staves, and drops here and there, so that one can drink it, and tell what sort of wine it is. Cethegus, in Jonson's *Catiline*, protests that he'd be torn in pieces, with wild Hippolytus, nay prove the death every limb over, ere he'd trust a woman with wind, could he retain. Sempronia retorts,—

“—— Sir, they’ll be trusted  
With as good secrets yet as you have any ;  
And carry them too as close and as concealed  
As you shall for your heart.”

Maitland could assure Cecil, in sad earnest, that the Queen of Scots could “well enough keep her own counsel when she had no will that any man should be privy of her doings.” Quite a mistaken idea, Theodore Hook deems it, that a woman cannot keep a secret—“nobody so well.” Trust her but with half, or try to keep it from her altogether, and then, he admits, she is sure to beat you, because her pride prompts her to find out what is purposely concealed, and her vanity induces her to tell what she has found out; and this in order to show her power of discovery. “Trust all to her, and she will never betray you; but half a confidence is not worth having.” A Quarterly Reviewer speaks of it having for centuries suited us to circulate a well-turned set of fallacies respecting woman’s incapacity for keeping a secret—the motive being merely thereby to secure an incessant scapegoat, on whom to lay the shame of our own indiscretions. “Now we are too happy when one of the sex will condescend to become the confidante of any secrets we may possess, and feel them honoured by her acceptance, whether she keeps them or no.” The alias of Mrs. Centlivre’s comedy of *The Wonder*, is “A Woman keeps a Secret,”—and Violante is herself the wonder. Pallid Phœbe Marks, the handmaiden of Lady Audley, and mistress of Lady Audley’s secret, is one who, silent and self-contained, seems to hold herself within herself, and take no colour from the outer world. Robert Audley, the observant barrister, scrutinizes her closely, as she moves about the room. And, “That,” he thought, “is a woman who could keep a secret.” Mr. Tennyson’s “rosy blonde,” Melissa, has

no such aspect, but, despite her complexion, and with her lips apart, and all her thoughts as fair within her eyes as bottom agates seen to wave and float in crystal currents of clear morning seas, she can be trusted to prove no "Danaïd of a leaky vase," and to Lady Psyche's appeal,

"——— 'Ah, fear me not,'  
Replied Melissa, 'no—I would not tell,  
No, not for all Aspasia's cleverness,  
No, not to answer, Madam, all those hard things  
That Sheba came to ask of Solomon.'"

Crabbe's poor Dolly Murrey, of the *Borough* almshouses, had won, in her day, and kept a reputation as

"Mistress of secrets: both the young and old  
In her confided—not a tale she told."

Betty, in the *Clandestine Marriage*, urges Miss Fanny to tell her all, for there's "not a more trustier creature on the face of the earth, than I am. Though I say it, I am as secret as the grave; and if it is never told till I tell it, it may remain untold till doomsday for Betty. . . . And yet I vow and purtest there's more plague than pleasure with a secret; especially if a body mayn't mention it to four or five of one's particular acquaintance." For a moment George Geith is tempted to tell Lady Geith his whole story; but he puts the temptation aside, remembering that confidence, even to the nearest and dearest, usually proves an expensive luxury; and thinking of the old saw, that three people can keep a secret if two are away. The Duchess of Malfi is less wary in Cariola's instance, to whose "known secrecy" she confides more than her life—her fame; and is promised both shall be safe; "for I'll conceal this secret from the world as warily as those that trade in poison keep poison from their children." But one should be careful not to entrust another unnecessarily with a



secret which it may be a hard matter to keep; nor should one's desire for aid or sympathy be indulged by dragging other people into one's misfortunes. "There is as much responsibility in imparting your own secrets, as in keeping those of your neighbour," says the author of *Friends in Council*. Unenviable in the extreme is the position of the page to whom Don Carlos says, in Schiller,

"A direful secret hast thou in thy keeping,  
Which, like a poison of terrific power,  
Shivers the cup that holds it into atoms.  
Guard every look of thine, nor let thy head  
Guess at thy bosom's secret. Be thou like  
The senseless speaking-trumpet, that receives,  
And echoes back the voice, but hears it not."

Assertions of entire competency to carry any amount of secrets, however weighty, and to keep them any length of time, against all comers, are cheap and common enough. Shakspeare's Æneas assures Troilus that "the secrets of nature have not more gift in taciturnity" than he. One of his French lords in *All's Well that Ends Well*, promises another who enjoins absolute observance of a critical secret, "When you have spoken it, 'tis dead, and I am the grave of it." Lovel assures John Woodvil, in Lamb's tragedy, "I am no babbler, sir, you need not fear me,"—and "How strange this passionate behaviour shows in you! sure you think me some weak one," he adds, when his too confiding friend hints at a possible Delilah to "kiss out secrets" from him. One servitor tells another, in *Ethwald*, a secret he has been stringently cautioned by the original teller to tell to none, that Ethwald may not hear it:—

"1st. serv. And thou in sooth obeyst his caution well.  
Now hear thou this from me; thou art a lout;  
And over and besides a babbling fool;  
Ay, and moreover all, I'll break thy head  
If thou dost tell again, in any wise,  
The smallest tittle of it.

2nd serv. Marry, I can be as secret as thyself!

I tell not those who blab.

1st serv. Yes, yes, thy caution is most scrupulous;

Thou 'lt whisper it in Ethwald's hither ear,

And bid the further not to know of it."

*Je suis muet*, professes or promises the Abbé when Scribe's Michonnet touches on a secret, and off at that tangent; but the old man distrusts the promise or profession: "C'est ce que chacun dit toujours dans le comité, et cependant tout finit par se savoir." Within the barbican of Spenser's House of Temperance a porter sat, and

"Utterers of secrets he from thence debar'd."

John Locke was an exceptional man morally as well as intellectually, and not the least so in this particular, that he not only, says Le Clerc, kept strictly a secret which had been confided to him, but he never mentioned anything which could prove injurious, although he had not been enjoined secrecy. And indeed, as Sir A. Helps has remarked, for once that secrecy is formally imposed upon you, it is implied a hundred times by the concurrent circumstances: all that your friend says to you as your friend, is entrusted to you only; and in fact there are few conversations which do not imply some degree of mutual confidence, however slight.

Pulteney (Lord Bath) was not altogether singular in attempting to prove that he could keep new secrets by revealing old ones, that is, by boasting of the instances in which he had been already trusted.

La Bruyère's list of violators of confidence includes those—hardly perhaps to be placed on the list—who are contemptuous of your secret, whatever its importance,—"*qui méprisent votre secret, de quelque conséquence qu'il puisse être: 'C'est un mystère? un tel m'en a fait part, et m'a défendu de le dire,' et ils le disent.*" Horace Walpole prays Lady Ossory to be restored to

his character of indiscreet in her good opinion, "or my neighbour Mr. Ellis will come and trust me with some secret out of the Utrecht Gazette. I have escaped many such sage friends by not reverencing mystery, to the prejudice of my preferment, no doubt; but I do not regret my misfortune, though my error is evident." Berthier is believed to have secured preferment with Napoleon by his "perfect silence" in matters of privy trust; for a secret divulged to Berthier was as safe as if its possessor were in his grave. "Can you keep a secret?" the dying man in Mr. Reade's Sheffield story asks of the inquisitor that is urging him to make a clean breast of it: "Yes!" exclaims the other, eagerly. "Then so can I," are the next, and the last, words of the resolute spirit overtaken by death.

Cowper tells Unwin he need never fear the communication of what he entrusts to him in confidence. "I once wrote a Connoisseur upon the subject of secret-keeping, and from that day to this I believe I have never divulged one." And again, three months later, "I am glad of your confidence, and have reason to hope I shall never abuse it. If you trust me with a secret, I am hermetically sealed." Or, as the porter in the Arabian Nights assures the ladies, "A secret with me is as sure as if it were in a closet whose key was lost, and the door sealed up." Mr. Sarcastic lost the acquaintance of Mrs. Cullender, by saying to her, when she had told him a piece of gossip as a very particular secret, that there was nothing so agreeable to him as to be in possession of a secret, for he made a point of telling it to all his acquaintance.

" Entrusted under solemn vows  
Of Mum and Silence and the Rose,  
To be retailed again in whispers,  
For the easy credulous to disperse,"

as Hudibras has it. Mrs. Cullender left her ingenuous confidant in great wrath, protesting that she would never again throw away *her* confidence on so leaky a vessel. The Dalilah of the *Agonistes* excuses her weakness as one incident to all her sex—the double weakness of curiosity, inquisitive, importunate of secrets, “then, with like infirmity, to publish them, both common female faults.” Did not she of Timna first betray Samson, and reveal the secret she wrested from him, carrying it straight to those who had corrupted her, his spies and rivals? The strong man thus rates the disgrace of blabbing when it is not woman that blabs:

“—— To have revealed  
Secrets of men, the secrets of a friend,  
How heinous had the fact been, how deserving  
Contempt, and scorn of all, to be excluded  
All friendship, and avoided as a blab,  
The mark of fool set on his front!”

Portia extracted his secret from Brutus by the signal and sanguinary proof she could offer him of self-control. And with Portia, says Dean Merivale, the secret of the tyrannicides was secure; but not so with many of the wild unprincipled men to whom it had been confided.

In his history of the revolt of Sicily in A.D. 1280, Gibbon remarks that the secret, so widely diffused and so freely circulated, was preserved above two years with impenetrable discretion; each of the conspirators declaring that he would cut off his left hand if it were conscious of the intentions of his right. Cardinal de Retz used to say that a secret is more easily kept by a good many people than one commonly imagines—a secret of importance he meant, among people interested in the keeping of it. And Chesterfield is of the same mind, where he holds that a secret properly communicated, only to those who are to be concerned in the



thing in question, will probably be kept by them, many though they be. "Little secrets are commonly told again, but great ones generally kept." Hundreds of persons, the very poorest included, were in the secret of Prince Charles Edward's fugitive movements in the Highlands; but, with one or two dubious exceptions, not one was found to whisper the secret, not one attempted to give him up to his enemies, the offered reward of thirty thousand pounds notwithstanding. So too in the Vendean campaign of 1832 the Duchess of Berri changed her abode not less (according to M. Berryer) than three or four times a week, and every change was known to eight or ten persons at least, yet, in the course of six months, not a single person betrayed the honourable confidence reposed in him. Not Portland himself, whom, by Macaulay's account, nature and habit co-operating had made the best keeper of secrets in Europe, could have better sustained that character.

Candid natures count it hard lines when they are forced to be reticent, in their own despite. But they make capital keepers of secrets nevertheless. Like the simple-minded Cornishman in story, Francis Tredethlyn, whose confiding candour had been wont to reveal his every feeling, and every shade of feeling, to his trusted if not trusty friend; but who, when once he had his secret to keep, kept it, all against the grain of his disposition, so well. "I never had but one secret to keep," quoth Parson Dale, "and I hope I shall never have another. A secret is very like a lie." "You had a secret then!" exclaims Richard Avenel, who had learnt, perhaps in America, to be a very inquisitive man; and he adds point-blank, "Pray, what was it?" "Why, what it would not be if I told you," rejoined the Parson,—"a secret." Old Mr. Trivett, in another fiction, is discussed by his disgusted friends as the "deadest hand at



a secret in the world. He never lets out anything. If you ask him what it is o'clock, you have to dig the information out of him with a ripping-chisel. Oh no; it's not the smallest use trying to learn anything from Mr. Trivett." Mr. Tulkinghorne, the family solicitor in *Bleak House*, wears an expressionless mask, and carries family secrets in every limb of his body and every crease of his dress. Whether he yields his clients anything beyond the services he sells, is his personal secret; and that he keeps, as he keeps the secrets of his clients: "He is his own client in that matter, and will never betray himself." His reticence is the admiration of the gushing, antiquated Volumnia Dedlock—for he is so original, such a stolid creature, she declares, such an immense being for knowing all sorts of things and never telling them. She is persuaded that he must be a Freemason, and the head of a lodge. The Abbé d'Olivet gives this character of Conrart the academician, *Il gardait inviolablement le secret des autres et le sien*. St. Simon affirms of Lewis the Fourteenth that he kept the secrets of others as religiously as his own, and that there was no mistress, minister, or favourite who could worm them out, even though themselves concerned in the matter. Now the French have, or had, no character for reticence, if we may trust so authoritative an old writer as Howell, who, midway in the seventeenth century, contrasting the Mounseer with the Don, affirmed it to be "a kind of sicknesse for a Frenchman to keep a secret long," whereas "all the drugs of Egypt cannot get it out of a Spaniard." Sir Arthur Helps somewhere speaks of "grave proud men" as very safe confidants; and he moots the question whether a secret will escape sooner by means of a vain man or a simpleton. Some people play with a secret, until at last it is suggested by their manner to some shrewd person who knows a

little of the circumstances connected with it ; others are treacherous, and sell it for their advantage ; others, out of conceit, wear it as an ornament ; others are indiscreet, and so let it drop by accident. Relating a case of this last kind, Mr. de Quincey enforces the doctrine that honour and fidelity do not form sufficient guarantees for the custody of secrets : presence of mind so as to revive one's obligations in time, tenacity of recollection, and vigilance over one's own momentary slips of tongue, so as to keep watch over indirect disclosures, are also requisite. Indeed he refuses to believe that, unless where the secret is of a nature to affect some person's life, most people would remember beyond a period of two years the most solemn obligations to secrecy. After a lapse of time, varying of course with the person, the substance of the secret will remain upon the mind ; but how he came by the secret, or under what circumstances, he will very probably have forgotten. " It is unsafe to rely upon the most religious or sacramental obligation to secrecy, unless, together with the secret, you could transfer also a magic ring that should, by a growing pressure or puncture, *sting* a man into timely alarm and warning." Of all personal qualities, the art of reticence is justly said to be the most important and valuable for a professional man to possess : lawyer or physician, he must be able to hold all and hear all without betraying by word or look, by injudicious defence any more than by overt treachery, by anger at a malicious accusation any more than by a smile at an egregious mistake : his business is to be reticent, not exculpatory, to maintain silence, not set up a defence nor yet proclaim the truth. Lady physicians we already have, and esteemed ones ; and lady lawyers, estimable or not, may follow ; but whether these practitioners will come up to the mark, as regards the re-

quirements of professional secrecy, time must show. Their capacity for it will be denied by male censors of the Baretti type,—for Baretti it was who, when London society was vexing the question of the authorship of Miss Burney's *Evelina*, laid a wager it was written by a man ; for no woman, he said, could have kept her own counsel. When Fanny told this to King George, his majesty was "diverted" exceedingly ; still more when she owned to her suspicion, with respect to the final discovery, that one of her sisters had betrayed her. "Oh ! your sister ?" exclaimed the king : "what, not your brother ? . . . Vastly well ! I see you are of Mr. Baretti's mind, and think your brother could keep your secret, and not your sister." A female servant would by some be fixed on as the likeliest of all blabs ; for servants in general have the reputation of being the most determined tellers of secrets, and female servants in particular.

Madame de Maintenon used to lecture her young ladies at St. Cyr on the liability of the upper classes to be discussed at all points, and in all shades of character, by their servants ; for these "when they are alone, talk of nothing but their masters and mistresses ; and if there is ever so little evil to tell, they are sure to divulge it. Reputation often depends more upon these people than their betters, who do not see us so near." Mr. Weller sees his way clear to a full knowledge of Mr. Charles Fitz-Marshall by means of pumping that gentleman's valet : "If I can get a talk with this here servant in the mornin', he'll tell me all his master's concerns." "How do you know that ?" interposed Mr. Pickwick. "Bless your heart, sir, servants always do," replied Mr. Weller ; whose master assents with an acquiescent "Oh, ah, I forgot that." A scarcely less popular writer ex-

patiates on the dreary theme of servants "enjoying the fun" of upstairs trouble: they listen, we are fairly warned, at our doors, and repeat our spiteful speeches in the kitchen, and watch us while they wait at table, and understand every sarcasm, every innuendo, every look. "The most polished form your hate and anger can take is transparent to those household spies. . . . Nothing is lost upon those quiet, well-behaved watchers." Joseph Haydn tells Consuelo, who has seen the secrets of courts, that he, as lackeys are accustomed to read their masters' letters, has learnt in the ante-chamber the hidden life of the great. "Oh, if great people only knew how their valets speak of them!"

Does poor silly Corydon, in Juvenal, really hold that great men's secrets ever lie untold? that servants keep them? *Secretum divitis ullum esse putas? Servi ut taceant*, etc. Secrets often indeed of the servants' own concocting,—for stewards, cooks, and butlers are apt to spread the mere malicious fictions of their head. If however there be upstairs secrets, trust the servants' hall for being "up to" them, not to keeping them. Tristram Shandy takes pains to show how the kitchen keeps itself *au courant* in regard of all that is of private interest or moment to master and mistress. Quite an exceptional establishment was Cato the Censor's, whose slaves could never be got to tell what master was about, or so much as to own that they knew. *Mirror magis*, because, as Shakespeare's sea-captain has it,

"—You know what great ones do,

The less will prattle of,"

and the least, perhaps, most of all. Swift's *Directions to Servants* bid the footman, in order to learn the secrets of other families, tell those of his master's: "thus will you grow a favourite both at home and abroad, and be regarded as a person of importance." Juvenal describes



a set of adventurers at Rome who got introduced into families as slaves, and having mastered the master's secrets, levied hush-money on the strength of it: *Scire volunt secreta domûs, atque inde timeri*. Well might the great satirist warn masters to live decent lives, if only to defy the tongues of their domestics—for, of a bad servant, the worst part is the tongue: *nam lingua mali pars pessima servi*. Even in a good servant, as servants go, it is bad enough. Aurora Leigh complains that being observed, when observation is not sympathy, is just being tortured; and wonderful are servants' powers of observation, exercised as preliminaries to their powers of tongue:

“Susannah could not stand and twist my hair,  
Without such glancing at the looking-glass  
To see my face there, that she missed the plait:  
And John,—I never sent my plate for soup,  
Or did not send it, but the foolish John  
Resolved the problem 'twixt his napkin'd hands,  
Of what was signified by taking soup  
Or choosing mackerel.”

But sometimes equally remarkable is waiting-man's or waiting-woman's skill in assuming an air of unconsciousness. “Servants are wonderful actors,” says Mr. Trollope, “looking often as though they knew nothing when they know everything,—as though they understood nothing, when they understand all.” Mr. Charles Reade, in the opening chapter of one of his novels, describes a father and son at dinner, subject to the presence and pressure of “three live suppressors of confidential intercourse,” two gorgeous footmen, and a “sombre, sublime, and in one word, episcopal” butler, who all three seemed models of grave discretion, but were known to be all ears, and bound by a secret oath to carry down each crumb of dialogue to the servants' hall, for curious dissection, and boisterous ridicule. One of Lord Lytton's

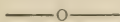


people opines that servants have the longest pair of ears of any created beings, jackasses not excepted,—for they stretch from the pantry to the parlour. Acton Bell's fine lady indiscreetly pours forth her confidence at table, regardless of the presence of the footman, who preserves an inflexible wooden expression of countenance the while; and a remonstrant is silenced with the assurance, "Oh, no matter! I never care about the footmen: they're mere automatons: it's nothing to them what their superiors say or do; they won't dare to repeat it;" and even if they did, "it would be a pretty thing, indeed, if we were to be tongue-tied by our servants." Mrs. Gore, on the other hand, singles out the Jeames class as foremost in mastering and in divulging a family secret,—their opportunities being so exceptionally great. Accompanying the carriage, conveying messages, etc., etc., Jeames is more confided in, though a less confidential servant, than the butler for instance, and is able to announce a flirtation in the family to the housemaid at least a fortnight before the butler drops a diplomatic hint to the housekeeper.

Fielding thinks people always deceive themselves who imagine they can hide trouble and embarrassment from their servants, "for these are always extremely quick on such occasions." Jotting down in his *Diary* a confidential colloquy with an unnamed friend, about a recent scandal, horrible in its complication and issues, Sir Walter Scott appends the remark: "All that was whispered is true—a sign how much better our domestics are acquainted with the private affairs of our neighbours than we are." Richardson's *Lovelace* protests of servants at large, that nothing they know of their master, or of his affairs, is a secret from any one of their fellows or followers,—were it even a matter that would hang him. But of all our novelists of note it is Mr. Thackeray who

has most pointedly and most persistently harped on this string,—a jarring one. Our lackeys sit in judgment on us, he says in *Esmond*: my lord's intrigues may be ever so stealthily conducted, but his valet knows them; and my lady's woman carries her mistress's private history to the servants' scandal-market, and exchanges it against the secrets of other abigails. When little Rawdon Crawley gasped out at various intervals significant exclamations of rage and grief, which told against his mother, "the cook looked at the housemaid; the housemaid looked knowingly at the footman; the awful kitchen inquisition which sits in judgment in every house,—and knows everything,—sat on Rebecca at that moment." At the disturbing episode which ruffled the smooth surface of a certain wedding at St. George's, as related in *The Newcomes*, John jeered at Thomas, we are told, and William turned his powdered head and signalled Jeames, who answered with a corresponding grin; and the author dares say that little history was discussed at many a dinner-table that day in the basement story of several fashionable houses. "Young people" he elsewhere apostrophizes with the caution, that when they think they are managing their "absurd little love-affairs ever so quietly, Jeames and Betsy in the servants' hall are very likely talking about them." When Colonel Newcome, a ruined man, had to break up his establishment, his dismissal of Martin and his comrades by no means took those worthies by surprise: they had been expecting this catastrophe quite as long as the Colonel himself, who thought he had kept his affairs so profoundly secret. And readers of *Vanity Fair* will easily recall to mind an exclamation of awe at the range and rigour of "that servants' inquisition"—how the characters of the visitors have been talked over by functionaries in white waistcoats on the landing, and

retainers in various uniforms in the hall—the man who brings you refreshment and stands behind your chair discussing you with the large gentleman in motley-coloured clothes at his side. We see Discovery walking respectfully up to my lady yonder, in the shape of a huge powdered man with large calves and a tray of ices—and Calumny behind him, in the shape of the hulking fellow carrying the wafer biscuits; and we know that her secret will be talked over by those men at their club at the public-house to-night. The suggestion sounds plausible, that some people ought to have mutes for servants in Vanity Fair—mutes who cannot write; for it follows the warning, If you are guilty, tremble: that fellow behind your chair may be a Janissary with a bowstring in his plush breeches pocket.



## IX.

### *COUNSELLORS MANY, AND TOO MANY.*

PROVERBS xi. 14, xxiv. 6.

PROBABLY one is more struck, on reflection and in reading, with the exceptions to the rule, than with confirmatory examples of it, that in the multitude of counsellors there is safety. The advantage of a council is intimated in one of the proverbs of the Sheviri attributed to Realmah: "Four fishes smelt at the bait and turned their tails to it: one fish came by and swallowed it;" of which proverb one of the Friends in Council, and the most critical, approvingly says that he has himself observed how much easier it is to delude fish when they come singly than when they come three or four together, and are fishes in council. And of the three leading advisers of Realmah we are told, that to get the good that

was really to be got out of these men, you must have mastered the peculiar bent of each of their minds, which prevented each one of them, taken by himself, from being a perfect counsellor; but which did not prevent their being of great use as individual members of a council. But it is noteworthy, that when the realm was in danger, and the council therefore met at once, the first thought of Realmah was a patriotic determination to get rid of the greater part of his council, and to conduct the war in the plenitude of despotic authority. A modern historian finds in the unlicensed discretion reposed by the Roman Senate in the general, the most efficient aid to the extent of early Rome's conquests; for war requires in a leader all the licence of a despot; and triumph, decision, and energy can only be secured by the unfettered exercise of a single will. And he points, by way of contrast, to the modern republics of Italy, as denying themselves scope for large conquests by their extreme jealousy of their commanders, often wisely ridiculed by the great Italian historians; an order from the Senate being almost indispensable before a baggage cart could move or a cannon be planted. One thing Salathiel speedily settled: the first assemblage of his confederate chieftains satisfied him of the absurdity of councils of war. Every man had his plan; and every plan had some personal object in view. "I saw that to discuss them would be useless and endless." So he desired the proposers to reduce their views to writing; received their memorials with perfect civility; took them to his cabinet, and gave their brilliancy to add to the blaze of his fire.

Good authorities in Roman history are of opinion that Pompey, in the war with Cæsar, was superior to him in military tactics, and that, had he not been hampered by his colleagues, the result might have been different.



Charles the Seventh's policy in 1429 was to march boldly from Orleans to Rheims, before the English had recovered from their panic: so think modern critics, in confirmation of what was the counsel of the Pucelle alone,—at whose idea the royal counsellors smiled in contempt,—*their* counsel being to proceed slowly and surely,—in other words, to give the English time to recover their spirits. Anarchy in Antwerp is the heading of one of Mr. Motley's graphic pages; and a lively picture it offers us of the confusion that ensued when the hydra heads of the multitudinous government were laid together: the college of ward-masters, the college of select men, the college of deacons, the college of ship-building, of fortification, of ammunition, and of what not more, all claiming equal authority, and all wrangling among themselves; not to forget, however, the college of "peace-makers," who wrangled more than all the rest put together. So true is it, that neither in politics nor in physic does the adage always hold good, that

"—— when any difficult work's to be done,  
Many heads can despatch it much better than one."

The wit is on Lisette's side, whether the wisdom be on Sganarelle's or not, in that question and answer scene in Molière:

*Lisette.* Que voulez-vous donc faire, monsieur, de quatre médecins? N'est-ce pas assez d'un pour tuer une personne?

*Sganarelle.* Taisez-vous. Quatre conseils valent mieux qu'un."

One has heard of half being more than the whole, and sometimes the quarter may have the same advantage.

In Drake's expedition of 1595, there were too many in command; and after losing time in debate which Sir Francis, if alone, would have spent in action, they were obliged to give up the attempt on the Canaries, with some loss. The otherwise unaccountable inaction of De



Witt in 1671 is explained at once when the anarchical constitution of the Dutch republic is remembered—its want of a central authority, and the fact that, to raise money or troops, the consent of a number of petty councils was necessary, in the multitude of whose councillors there was anything but safety.

The quality of the counsel, and the ability of the counsellors, are elements of main import in the affirmation of the Wise King, that without counsel purposes are disappointed, but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.

To Montesquieu it seems that the heads of the greatest of men become narrowed when they are gathered together, and that where the wise are over many, wisdom is correspondingly less. *Là où il y a plus de sages, il y a aussi moins de sagesse.* Butler's Hudibrastics run to the same tune:—

“For though most hands despatch apace,  
And make light work, the proverb says,  
Yet many different intellects  
Are found t' have contrary effects;  
And many heads t' obstruct intrigues,  
As slowest insects have most legs.”

Lukewarm and timid counsels are said to prevail almost invariably with all small assemblies of men upon whom a serious responsibility is thrown; whereas rash counsels are often adopted in large assemblies, because in them a sense of individual responsibility is lost in numbers.

At Plassey, Clive, for the first and last time in his life, called a council of war; and, true to the adage, the council refused to fight. “If I had abided by its decision,” said Clive, in his evidence before the House of Commons, “it would have been the ruin of the East India Company.” One of his critical biographers re-

cognizes the same truth as holding good in all ages, and in all transactions, civil and military, when vigour and decision are requisite to success; the shelter of numbers being never sought but by those who have not the moral courage to act on their own conviction; whereas true intrepidity of mind never seeks to divide responsibility. "In the multitude of counsellors there may be safety; but," says Alison,\* "it is in general safety to the counsellors, not to the counselled." Shakespeare's remonstrant envoy to the English nobles utters a ringing note in every line of his remonstrance—

"And, whilst a field should be despatched and fought,  
You are disputing of your generals.  
One would have lingering wars, with little cost;  
Another would fly swift, but wanteth wings;  
A third man thinks, without expense at all,  
By guileful fair words peace may be obtained.  
Awake, awake, English nobility!"

Pitiable was the plight of more than one Austrian commander, himself brave and intelligent, during the wars of the French Revolution and Empire, when, as Dr. Croly describes the *status quo*, he must wait for the opinion of other men—men too far off to know a single fact of the campaign; too blind to see it, if they were on the spot; and too jealous even of their own general to suffer him to beat the enemy, if victory would throw their nothingness into the shade. The successes of the

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\* Dr. Gregory had said it before Sir Archibald; and how many may not have said it before Dr. Gregory? Scott makes Raleigh say it, in *Kenilworth*, when the Queen rebukes young Walter for denying her Doctor Masters access to the sick Earl of Sussex, then in the skilful hands of Wayland Smith. "Know'st thou not the holy writ saith, 'In the multitude of counsel there is safety'?" "Ay, madam," said Walter, "but I have heard learned men say, that the safety spoken of is for the physicians, not for the patient."  
—Chapter xiv.

allies were too rapid for their cabinets, and the "stiff-skirted and antiquated privy councillors of Vienna and Berlin" stopped the way; couriers were busy while soldiers were yawning themselves to death; pioneers stood pickaxe in hand, waiting the order to break ground; and the only war carried on was in the discontents of the military councils.

John Balfour, of Burley, has gained a main point when he succeeds in persuading the wiser of his friends that the counsellors of their party are too numerous, and that they cannot expect the Midianites to be, by so large a number, delivered into their hands. "They have hearkened to my voice, and our assemblies will be shortly reduced within such a number as can consult and act together." Mr. Carlyle's pronounced preference of one man "with an eye," and a stout arm, and a strong will of his own, to any amount of parliament and palaver, would have come home to the business and bosoms of such as Burley in their day.

The contrast is often quoted between the Academy, whose forty members took fifty-six years to compile the French Dictionary, and Dr. Johnson, who alone compiled the English one in eight. Side by side with the Emigration Board, under whose management hundreds were dying of fever from close packing, and under whose licence were sailing vessels which, like the Washington, were the "homes of fraud, brutality, tyranny, and obscenity," Mr. Herbert Spencer some years ago compared Mrs. Chisholm's beneficent enterprise, and from the comparison drew conclusions of practical moment. An Executive Board, even supposing it to combine every element of talent and experience, has been pronounced little better than an ingenious contrivance for eluding the fair accountability of a governing body to those whose interests it represents. "As to the no-

bodies and lay figures who form so large a section of every railway board, they silently consume their sherry and biscuits, acquiesce in all the chairman's suggestions, endorse the contractor's schemes, maintain a dignified air of puzzled wisdom, and pocket the guineas which the secretary hands to them with a sweet sense of official fatigue, which the apprehended ruin of a thousand shareholders does not embitter or disturb." Then again, of charity committees and the like it has been said that utter helplessness is their most curious characteristic; that, animated by a sincere desire to do a great deal, they seldom contrive to get beyond the preliminary stage of talking; but every evil must work its own cure, and by this time benevolent and charitable people are confessedly coming to see the absolute impotence of a numerous body of men for carrying on the details of business, and to resign themselves to the necessity of a more concentrated agency—though complaints are still rife, that the custom of confiding the administration of all benevolent undertakings to a large body of men is in some quarters retained with a tenacity against which the teachings of experience are powerless.

It was of a joint-stock literary undertaking that Gibbon was thinking when he remarked, that the operations of a society are often perplexed by the divisions of sentiments and characters, as well as often retarded by the degrees of talent and application. A recent essayist on *Common Sense* observes that it does not work in numbers, and will not act freely in consultations, committees, nor, especially, in large numbers: a thousand fairly sensible people will, under the pressure of contact, do a frightfully foolish thing at which each acting alone would stand aghast.



## X.

### *THE SURE SIDE OF SURETYSHIP.*

PROVERBS xi. 15.

**P**RUDENTIAL morality, with the prudential element at least as largely present and as actively efficient as the moral, is the characteristic, not only of very many proverbs of the world worldly, all the wide world over, but of not a few in the sacred Book of Proverbs itself. Some of these would seem to be best read, for purposes of Christian edification, with the Sermon on the Mount by way of a corrective.

Among such is the proverb on the perils of suretyship. "He that hateth suretyship is sure;" "and he that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it." "A man void of understanding striketh hands, and becometh surety in the presence of his friend." "Be not thou one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts." "Take his garment that is surety for a stranger," etc. There is only, the maxims go to show, one sure side of suretyship; and that is the outside. Keep out of it altogether. He that hateth it is sure. He only that will have nothing to do with it is safe.

Mr. Crabb Robinson, mildly free in thinking, and in journalizing his thoughts, was once "unpleasantly" affected in Yarmouth parish church by "a verse from Proverbs, read by the preacher," *the* verse, in fact, which is now under our notice. And what suggested itself as remarkable to the heterodox listener was, that no enemy to revealed religion should have attacked it by means of a novel or poem, in which mean and detestable characters should be made to justify themselves by precepts found in the Bible. A work of that kind, he considered,



would be insidious, and not the less effective because a superficial objection ; but some share of the reproach he would assign to the theologians who "neglect to discriminate between the spiritual or inspired, and the unspiritual or uninspired, parts of the sacred writings." The worldly wisdom of the text in question he accepted as past disputing, and if found in the works of a Franklin he would greet it as unobjectionable,—“for he was the philosopher of prudence ;” but Mr. Robinson could not restrain his regret that such a lesson should be taught us as “the word of God.” Nor could he refrain, even in church, from giving expression to that regret. For, turning to his companion, Mr. Dawson Turner, he sceptically whispered, “Is that the word of God ?” “All bankers think so,” was the apt reply. However unspiritual the text, this response was *spiritual* enough. Yet see to what good purpose holy George Herbert, as spiritual as he was *spiritual*, could turn the text, by way of doctrine and instruction in righteousness. Having counselled the putting of a friend in one’s bosom, and going all lengths of life and death even, to prove one’s love to him, he goes on to say :—

“Yet be not surety, if thou be a father.

Love is a personal debt. I cannot give

My children’s right, nor ought he take it : rather

Both friends should die, than hinder them to live.

Fathers first enter bonds to nature’s ends ;

And are her sureties, ere they are a friend’s.”

With the unmarried, *c’est autre chose*. But even then George Herbert prescribes limits of suretyship, and deprecates indiscriminate hazard. He was not oblivious of the *terminus ad quem* of suretyship to which his contemporary Dr. Donne refers, in a similitude in one of his satires to

“—— prisoners, which whole months will swear,

That only suretyship hath brought them there.”

To Thales is ascribed the Greek proverb, Be surety, and mischief is close at hand : ἐγγύα, πάρεσσι δ' ἄτη—or, as the Latin paraphrase of it runs, with equal terseness : *Sponde, noxa præsto est*. Beware of suretyship for thy best friends, the great Lord Burghley advises : "He that payeth another man's debts, seeketh his own decay." But some there is no teaching. Some, experience itself, best of schoolmasters, quite fails to teach. Good-natured people, that can't say No, are in this respect apt to be impenetrably indocile. It has been said there was never a row of chestnuts roasting at the fire for which your good-natured oaf will not stretch out his hand at the bidding and for the advantage of a friend. "Experience teaches the poor oaf nothing ; not even that fire burns." To put his name at the back of a bill, "just as a mere form ;" to lend his money, just for a few days ; or to do any other sort of self-immolating folly on the faithful promise that the fire will not burn nor the knife cut—it all comes as easy to men of the good-natured sort as their alphabet. Indeed, it is truly said to be their alphabet, "out of which they spell their own ruin ;" but so long as the impressionable temperament lasts, so long as the liking to do a good-natured action is greater than caution or the power of analogical reasoning, so long,—it is safely predicted,—will the oaf make himself the catspaw of the knave, till at last he has left himself no fingers wherewith to pluck out the chestnuts for himself or another. No such catspaw is the small Lanarkshire laird, Hamilton by name, of whom the story runs, that, being importuned by a neighbour to put his name to "a bit bill" for twenty pounds at three months' date, he was resolute with his "Na, na, Tammas, I canna do that." "It's a sma' affair to refuse me, laird." "Weel, ye see, Tammas, if I was to pit my name til't, ye wad get the siller frae the bank, and when

the time came round, ye wadna be ready, and I wad hae to pay't ; sae then you and me wad quarrel, sae we may just as weel quarrel the noo, as lang's the siller's in ma pouch." Jerrold's Montague St. George mellifluously solicits his " dear Richards " to accept a bill of his for a cool hundred and fifty : he has many acquaintance, he tells his dear Richards, any of whom would have gone through the little form, " for it is only a form." But no : that would be treason to his friend : the writer owns himself apt to be imaginative, and thus it is to him a sweet and peculiar pleasure to fancy both their names linked indissolubly together—the union legalized by a stamp—each name adding value to the other by being paired. " Thus, it almost seems to me, that we merge two souls into one—that in very truth, by the potent spell of friendship, we are no longer single, but bound together by a bond unknown to those pagans of the ancient time, Orestes and Pylades, Damon and Pythias !" But the dear Richards is not to be so wheedled out of hard cash : he agrees that friendship is a divine thing ; indeed, to his mind, so divine is it, that it should never be mixed up with money. His " friend's " picture of the unison of souls, when both the souls' hands are to the same bill, he owns to be beautiful and affecting ; but it occurs to him that the sheriff cares not for souls, only inasmuch as they are in bodies. " Now, unhappily, so far as we know, disembodied souls do not draw or accept ; otherwise, what felicity would it be to me to meet and mingle with your spirit on a five-shilling stamp !" Of course it is tempting to think that by the alchemy of a few ink-drops *ce cher Richards* could put a hundred and fifty gold pieces (bating the discount) in the purse of a friend. Alas ! he protests, if the ceremony began and ended with ink, he would spend a Black Sea upon him. Richards too is apt to be imaginative, and

imagination fly not always together. Would their two souls be united, supposing him to accept the bill? Only too closely, perhaps. "For three months I should feel ourselves growing together, every day strengthening the process. I should feel as if I breathed for two; nay, I should hardly turn in my bed unincumbered. I should, in my fancy, become a double man with only single strength to bear about my added load." His accomplished and suasive, but not quite persuasive, correspondent knows the story of Sinbad and the Old Man of the Mountain? That is a fine allegory, Mr. John Richards suggests,—though not generally understood. The truth is, on this expositor's showing, that the Old Man drew a bill, and Sinbad—guileless tar!—accepted it. Lord Skindeep, in *Bubbles of a Day*, is, if more than equally sentimental, more practically common-place, in his evasion of speculator Smoke's request:—

"SMOKE. I knew the kindness of your heart. You'll assist me?

SKIND. Anything I can do for my fellow-man; but for you, Smoke, heart and pocket both are open to you. For your sake alone, I wish both were equally full.

SMOKE. My lord, I wouldn't touch your pocket for the world; I reverence your heart; and all I want is one half-minute's use of your right hand.

SKIND. (*Grasping his hand.*) You have it, Smoke,—you have it; and my best wishes with it.

SMOKE. I knew you'd not refuse me. Here's the bill. (*Presenting it.*)

SKIND. (*Taking paper, looking at it, and, affecting a burst of emotion, returning it to SMOKE.*) You didn't mean it, but you've struck me to the soul.

SMOKE. What's the matter? This emotion at the sight of a mere bill is—(*aside*: just three months too soon. It's like weeping at an onion—in the seed.)"

George Colman finds proper space in his Autobiography for his entanglements in bill transactions, while yet under age, with another in *that* sense *nonagenarian*,



a brother collegian at Oxford, subsequently a clerical dignitary, who one morning wrote "enclosing his draught upon me for five hundred pounds, which he desired me to accept, as a matter of course, that he might complete a loan." Young George the Younger, in the flush of youthful friendship, and in blissful ignorance of worldly business and cares, subscribed the bills without hesitation, and sent them back by return of post. A few days afterwards his Christ Church chum forwarded to him from town a second letter, containing further bills to the same amount for his acceptance, stating that there was some informality in the first draughts, which were therefore useless. He accepted *de novo*; and thus the notes for five hundred were *encored*, as he phrases it, to the tune of a thousand; for his friend, as unpractised in the ways of the world as himself, had fallen into the clutches of a scoundrel money-scrivener. The moral is the old story, the imprudence of becoming "bound for a friend." It is so hard for some young friends to say No,—so hard while yet they are in what Cleopatra calls their salad days, when they are green in judgment, Verdant Green freshmen, with the world before them, not behind. But to say No, in such cases, and still more strenuously to say No in after life, when by family responsibilities a man has given hostages to fortune, is to cause disappointments of the kind which an essayist on Disappointments classes with such as the kindest hearts will have no sympathy with, and failures over which we may without malignity rejoice; for who feels very deeply either for the disappointed burglar, who retires from your dwelling-house at three in the morning, leaving a piece of the calf of his leg in the jaws of your trusty watch-dog, or for the disappointed friend who "with elongated face retires from your study, having failed to persuade you to attach your signature to a bill for some



hundreds of pounds 'just as a matter of form.' Very likely he wants the money ; so did the burglar : but is that any reason why *you* should give it to him ?" You are counselled to refer him to the wealthy and influential relatives of whom he has frequently talked to you, and who are the very people to assist him in such a case with their valuable autograph : as for yourself, you have children and self to think of and to care for ; and in them you have a good reason for hating suretyship, and a good hater of that goes the only way to be sure. The experienced author of *Caxtoniana* apostrophizes his "young friend," be he patrician or plebeian, who reads those essays, and plies him with earnest monitions to learn to say No at the first to the charming acquaintance who jauntily asks for his name to a bill. Allowing that Damon can pay the money, are his other obligations in life such as to warrant the sacrifice to Pythias—or rather to some Dionysius in the background ? What careers bright in promise this Mentor claims to have seen close in jail or in exile ; what talents, profuse in their blossom, die off without coming to fruit ; what virtues the manliest rot into vices the meanest—which, when one cried in amazement, "How account for so doleful an end to so fair a commencement?"—solve their whole mystery in this : "Damon never recovered his first fatal error ; Damon put his name to a bill by which Pythias promised to pay so and so in three months." In various of his novels Lord Lytton gives pointed illustration to the doctrine. Frank Hazeldean is in a fair (or foul) way of going to the bad when he has to lament his getting involved with that "poor Borrowell" who got into such a scrape at Goodwood : he could not resist "poor Borrowell"—a debt of honour, that must be paid : "so when I signed another bill for him, he could not pay it, poor fellow ! Really he would

have shot himself if I had not renewed it. And now it is swelled to such an amount with that cursed interest, that *he* can never pay it ; and one bill, of course, begets another—and to be renewed every three months," etc. In a later fiction from the same fluent pen we read the counsel, Be to your friend what you please except security for him. "Orestes never asked Pylades to help him to borrow at fifty per cent." The Colonel in *What will He Do with It?* tells Lionel, "No man has more friends than I have ; never did I lose one—never did I sign a bill. Your father pursued a different policy ; he signed many bills—and lost many friends." Mr. Trollope is as pronounced a teacher by example and warning, to the same effect, as Lord Lytton himself. Charlie Tudor, in the *Three Clerks*, all too soon is instructed in the proper quarter how to get a brother clerk to draw a bill, how he is to accept it himself, and how his patron is to discount it for him, paying him real gold in exchange for his worthless signature ; and capitally described is the young fellow's sense of something delightful in the feeling that he could make money of his name in this way, as great bankers do of theirs, by putting it at the bottom of a scrap of paper. The Vicar in *Framley Parsonage* is another "frightful example." Mr. Sowerby adroitly secures the gentlemanly parson's name to a bill for £400. He is sorry to demur to the loan, at first, protesting that he has not got a hundred, no, not fifty pounds by him in the world. Of course he has not, Mr. Sowerby rejoins : men don't walk about the streets with £400 in their pockets. What is it Mr. Sowerby wants then ? Why, the Vicar's name, to be sure. "Believe me, my dear fellow, I would not ask you really to put your hand into your pocket to such a tune as that. Allow me to draw on you for that amount at three months.

Long before that time I shall be flush enough." And then, before Mark Robarts can answer, Mr. Sowerby has a bill stamp and pen and ink out on the table before him, and is filling in the bill as though his friend had already given his consent. Reluctantly the clergyman at last takes the pen and signs the bill ; the first time in his life he has ever done such an act, and, after being shaken cordially by the hand of Sowerby, walks off to his own bedroom a wretched man ; as well he may be, the sequel shows. It is of the Sowerby species that the author of the *Eustace Diamonds* somewhere affirms that if there be an existence of wretchedness on earth it must be that of the elderly worn-out *roué* who has run this race of debt and bills of accommodation and acceptances,—of what, in good broad English, should be called "lying and swindling, falsehood and fraud,"—and who, having ruined all whom he should have loved, having burnt up every one who would trust him a little, is at last left to finish his life with such bread and water as these men get, without one honest thought to strengthen his sinking heart, or one honest friend to hold his shivering hand. If a man could only think of that, as he puts his name to the first little bill, as to which he is so good-naturedly assured that it can easily be renewed !

When Lawrence Fitzgibbon asks Phineas Finn, on a sofa in the corner of the smoking-room, to put his name to the back of a bill for two hundred and fifty pounds at six months' date, "But, my dear Lawrence," is the reply, "two hundred and fifty pounds is a sum of money utterly beyond my reach." "Exactly, my dear boy," is the ready rejoinder, "and that's why I've come to you. D'ye think I'd have asked anybody who by any impossibility might have been made to pay anything for me ?" "But what's the use of it then ?" "All the

use in the world. It's for me to judge of the use, you know. I'll make it of use, my boy. And take my word, you'll never hear about it again. It's just a forestalling of salary; that's all." And Phineas Phinn with many misgivings, with much inward hatred of himself for his own weakness, did put his name on the back of the bill which Lawrence Fitzgibbon had prepared for his signature. And of course he did hear of it again; almost indeed it seemed as if he never were to hear the last of it, never to get over it, or out of it.

Borrowing your friend's name, as a discourser on bill transactions has said, you place your own at his disposal; and the bargain is no equal one if he is already over head and ears: thenceforward you begin the *glissade* on the ice-slope, where your most strenuous exertions can at best only retard the inevitable catastrophe: if you had no ready money before, you are never likely to have it again; and, in fact, it is all over with you, with your prospects and peace of mind. You begin, says Colonel Morley, by what you call trusting a friend, that is, aiding him to self-destruction—"buying him arsenic to clear his complexion"—and end by dragging all near you into your own abyss, as a drowning man would clutch at his own brother.

## XI.

### *BRUTE LIFE HELD IN RIGHTEOUS REGARD.*

PROVERBS xii. 10.

WHAT the cruelty of the wicked is, at its worst, and theirs, words might seem wanting to show, after it has been said that even the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. But "a righteous man regardeth the life of his beast." Jacob, as flockmaster, is studiously careful for his flocks and herds as well as for his tender children: "if men should overdrive them one day, all the flock will die." So, "I will lead on softly," said he to Esau his brother, "according as the cattle that goeth before me be able to endure." The angel of the Lord, standing in the way, rebukes Balaam for smiting his ass these three times: that unrighteous man, wishing there were a sword in his hand, too literally regardeth not the life of his beast. The law of Moses forbids muzzling the ox that treadeth out the corn. And the righteous Lord,—shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?—remembers in sparing Nineveh, and as a reason for sparing it, the "much cattle" of that great city.

Considering how mainly the Arab depends for safety and life upon the speed and vigour of his horse, it is no way surprising to find the commentators on the Koran saying that the Arab is bound to love his horse as himself, and to devote to him, when necessary, the food provided for his children. One such authority, quoted by the Emir Abdel Kader, says that whoever feeds and cherishes a horse for the love of God will be counted among the number of those who are charitable among men, his sins will be forgiven him, and he will be rewarded hereafter.



We see and hear the humourist Goldery, in Soulié's *Comte de Toulouse*, "adressant des questions pleines d'intérêt aux deux chevaux sur la qualité de l'orge, du foin, de la paille qu'on leur avait servis," in their curious and dubious quarters. William Penn, at the close of the Imaginary Conversation with Peterborough, summons his helper Abel, who stands expecting him, and knitting hose, to take his mare and feed her. Has Abel dined? Nay. Is he hungry? Yea. Greatly?

*Abel.* In thy [Penn's] house none hungereth painfully: but verily at this hour my appetite waxeth sharp.

*Penn.* Feed thou first this poor good creature, the which is accustomed to eat oftener than thou art, and the which haply hath fasted longer."

Captain Dalgetty refuses the proffered assistance of those at the castle of Darnlinvarach who wish to relieve him of the charge of his horse. "It is my custom, my friends, to see Gustavus (for so I have called him, after my invincible master) accommodated myself: we are old friends and fellow-travellers, and as I often need the use of his legs, I always lend him in my turn the service of my tongue, to call for whatever he has occasion for;" and accordingly Dugald strides into the stable after his steed, without further apology. Later in the story we come upon the master looking on the animal with great complacency for about five minutes, while the latter is busy despatching a large measure of corn which he has filled for it with his own hands, the charger first returning his caresses, by licking those ministrant hands and that eager face from which beams benediction as the mouth utters it, "Much good may it do your honest heart, Gustavus." And when, some chapters later, the veteran has to leave Gustavus in the hands of a "breechless" gillie, in order to save his own life, "Och, och!" is his cry, "Eheu! as we used to say

at Mareschal College, must I leave Gustavus in such grooming? . . . If you knew but the value of Gustavus, and the things we two have done and suffered together! See, he turns back to look at me!—Be kind to him, my good breechless friend, and I will requite you well.”

Another of Sir Walter's fictions offers us another careful rider who cares well for his steed. That is Tyrell, in *St. Ronan's Well*, who gives such strict charges on alighting at the Cleikum Inn, touching the comfort of his horse—that he be unbridled, and put into a clean and cozy stall, the girths slacked, and a cloth cast over his loins; but that the saddle be not removed till the master himself come to see him dressed. Anon we have the guest giving general directions to Mistress Dods, followed by, “Meantime, I will go see after my horse.” “The merciful man,” quoth Meg, when he is gone, “is merciful to his beast.—He had aye something about him by ordinar, that callant,” whom, as a callant, she had known and liked so well in auld lang syne. Accompanying Tyrell to the stable, we see and hear him saluted by his horse with feathering ears, and that low amicable neigh, with which the approach of a loving and beloved friend is greeted; and we see that *he* sees the faithful creature in every respect duly attended to. Meg Dods is not the only enunciator of the proverb in this tale; at the tragical close of it, we find the caustic old nabob, Mr. Touchwood, refusing to let the hired horses go further, in avowed respect for it: “The poor carrion are tired, and the merciful man is merciful to his beast.” The mediæval writer of Latin prose, Bernardus Silvester, has been commended as one of the few in those days—enough, however, to make a *catena*—who could feel for the sufferings of dumb animals. “Considera itaque de cibo et de potu animal-

ium tuorum, nam esuriunt et non petunt." Is it because the brutes are dumb, George Eliot starts the suggestive query, that we are apt to be kinder to the brutes that love us than to the women that love us?—a query referring to Adam Bede and his dog Gyp, on that night when his anger made Adam less tender than usual to his mother, but did not prevent him from caring as much as usual for his dog.

An excerpt from the journal of the late Sir Henry Lawrence is thus introduced by one of his biographers, Sir Herbert Edwardes : " Here we see him, though given to galloping, 'merciful to his beast : '—' Lay down on the floor for a quarter of an hour ; dressed and went to see my horse Conrad, who is my sole stand-by. He is a grey Arab, somewhat old, but still a good horse. . . . I take so much care of him that I suspect he will die. That he may come in cool, I always walk him the last three or four miles ; and as I walk myself the first hour, it is in the middle of the journey I get over the ground.' "

The commandant in Balzac's *Médecin de Campagne* is prompt to follow his steed into the good curé's stable, "pour lui donner un coup d'œil, et voir comment il allait s'y trouver"—and a real pleasure it is to the stranger to find in a well-kept stable, with plenty of litter, the curé's own steed in plump and prime condition, and marked by "l'air heureux et doux des campagnards, cet air qui fait reconnaître un cheval de curé entre tous les autres chevaux." It is an odd incident Mrs. Gaskell records of the old minister who has included in his evening prayer a petition for the cattle and live creatures, and who, at the conclusion, before the family have risen from their knees, speaks *on* his knees to a dependant, who turns round on *his* knees to attend : "John, didst see that Daisy had her warm mash to-night ;

for we must not neglect the means, John—two quarts of gruel, a spoonful of ginger, and a gill of beer—the poor beast needs it, and I fear it slipped out of my mind to tell thee; and here was I asking a blessing and neglecting the means, which is a mockery,” said he, dropping his voice.

In the old *chanson de geste* known to students of antiquarian French literature by the title of *Aiol de Saint-Gilles*, the old duke Elie is as fond of his famous destrier, the incomparable Marchegay, as of his son Aiol; and when the latter returns from his adventures without the horse, and indeed declares Marchegay to be dead in the wars, vehement is the *beau sire's* indignation at the tone of the avowal—which however is only affected to try him, and to heighten the subsequent effect of a safe and happy restoration:—

“ Et Marchegay est mort, à sa fin est allé.  
Dès longtemps l'ont mangé les chiens dans un fossé.  
Il ne pouvait plus courir, il était tout lourdant.—  
Quand Elie l'entend, peu s'en faut qu'il enrage :—  
Glouton, lui dit le duc, mal l'osâtes vous dire  
Que Marchegay soit mort, mon excellent destrier,  
Jamais autre si bon ne sera retrouvé.  
Sortez hors de ma terre : n'en aurez onc un pied.”

Whereupon Aiol gives the signal for the steed to be brought forward, all in goodly trappings and rich array:

“ Et devant lui il fit Marchegay amener,  
Le cheval était gras, pleins avait les côtés,  
Car Aiol l'avait fait longuement reposer.  
Par deux chaînes d'argent il le fait amener.  
Elie écarte un peu son vêtement d'hermine,  
Et caresse au cheval les flancs et les côtés.”

Was not Alexander just as fond of his Bucephalus? showing as much regret, says Plutarch, when that gallant charger died, well stricken in years (thirty of them, by some accounts), as if he had lost a faithful friend and companion of the human race.



Mr. Spectator sees the goodness of the master even in Sir Roger de Coverley's old house-dog, and in a grey pad that was kept in the stable with great care and tenderness, out of regard to his past services, though he had been useless for several years. The author of *The Doctor* is eager to repudiate the supposition of Nobs ever having been made dog's-meat by his master, who had far too much regard for that good old horse, to let his remains be treated with such indignity, and too much sense of obligation and humanity to part with an old dumb servant when his strength began to fail, and consign him to the hard usage which "is the common lot of these poor creatures in this, in this respect, hardhearted and wicked nation." Nobs, we are assured, when his labour was past, had for the remainder of his days the run of the fields at Thaxted Grange; and when, in due course of nature, he died of old age, instead of being sent to the tanners and the dogs, he became, like "brave Percy," food for—worms: a grave was dug, wherein he was decently deposited, with his shoes on, and Barnaby and his master planted a horse-chestnut on the spot. "Hadst thou been a bay horse, Nobs, it would have been a bay-tree instead." As to "turning out" an old horse into the fields for the rest of his days, Sir Francis Head, in *The Horse and his Rider*, makes merry at the expense of the "munificent gentlemen" who thus reward the faithful services of an aged hunter; they might almost as well, he says, reward an old worn-out butler, or bent, decrepit, toothless housekeeper, by consigning them both for the winter of their lives to the parish workhouse; where, at no cost to themselves, they would at least receive lodging, firing, food, and raiment;—for downright cruelty he deems it, to turn out into a park a horse which not only loves his stable, and not only never wishes to leave it, but whenever he is taken



out of it, even after a confinement of many weeks, evinces a desire to re-enter it; if he could speak, he would tell you how poor a return it is for faithful service, to deprive him of the oats, beans, hay, bed, clothing, warm stable, and companions, to which he has been accustomed all his life. Else it is a pleasant picture Cowper paints of

“The veteran steed excused his task at length,  
In kind compassion of his failing strength,  
And turned into the park or mead to graze,  
Exempt from future service all his days.”

Southey relates with a fine glow of fellow-feeling how Sir Robert Clayton, as commander of a troop of British cavalry which, after service on the Continent, was disbanded in the city of York, and the horses sold, could not bear to think that his old fellow-campaigners, who had borne brave men to battle, should be ridden to death as butchers' hacks, or worked in dung-carts till they became dog's-meat, and who therefore purchased a piece of ground upon Knavesmire heath, and turned out the old horses to have their run there for life.\* One of the best traits related by Roger North of his brother, the Lord Keeper Guilford, is, in the Doctor's opinion, that all his horses,—bred by himself, coming first to the husbandry as colts, and from thence, as they were fit, taken into his equipage,—when disabled for that service by age or accident, “were returned to the place from whence they came, and there expired.” The Mummers' Song of *Poor Old Horse* exhorts all gentlemen and sportsmen, and men of courage bold,—

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\* What made this honourable act of Sir Robert's to be the longer had in remembrance, was the curious fact, that one day when these horses were grazing, a thunderstorm gathered, at the fires and sounds of which, as if mistaken for the signs of approaching battle, they were seen to get together and form in line, almost in as perfect order as if they had their old masters upon their backs.

“All you that’s got a good horse, take care of him when old ;  
Then put him in your stable, and keep him there so warm ;  
Give him good corn and hay, pray let him take no harm.  
Poor old horse ! poor old horse !”

A neglected one delivers himself of stanza after stanza in deprecation of the neglect from which he suffers : once he had his clothing of fine linsey-woolsey, and his well-combed tail and mane, and his shiny coat, and his plump round shoulders, to boast of ; but now all is feebleness and decay ; and instead of the best corn and meadow-grass he is forced to nip whatever short commons in the way of dry herbage he can find.

“I used to be kept up all in a stable warm,  
To keep my tender body from any cold or harm ;  
But now I’m turned out in the open fields to go,  
To face all kinds of weather, the wind, coid, frost, and snow !  
Poor old horse ! poor old horse !”

Burns indited a prevailing protest in favour of all such worn-out workers, in his Auld Farmer’s Salutation to his Auld Mare Maggie, on giving her the accustomed ripp of corn to hansel in the New Year. It’s now “some nine-and-twenty years” since she was his “guid father’s meare,”—a bonny gray, dappled, sleek, and glaizie ; though now “howe-backit, knaggie, dowie, stiff, an’ crazy.” The auld master and the auld mare have worked together in fair weather and foul, “an wi’ the weary warl’ fought ;” and the master is not going to discard the mare at this time of day.

“And think na, my auld, trusty servan’,  
That now perhaps thou’s less deservin,  
An’ thy auld days may end in starvin,  
For my last fow,  
A heapit stimpart,\* I’ll reserve ane  
Laid by for you.

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\* *Stimpart* = the eighth part of a *fow* = bushel.

“We’ve worn to crazy years thegither ;  
We’ll toyte \* about wi’ ane anither ;  
Wi’ tentie care I’ll flit thy tether  
                                    To some hain’d rig,  
Where ye may nobly rax your leather,  
                                    Wi’ sma’ fatigue.”

Were the “auld meare” as deplorable an object as Petruchio’s spavined steed, past cure of the fives and stark spoiled with the staggers, near-legged before, and swayed in the back, “possessed with the glanders, and like to mose in the chine,” or as far-gone as the starved coursers at Agincourt in another Shakspearian definition, poor jades, that lob down their heads, drooping their hides and hips ; the gum down-roping from their pale-dead eyes, while “in their pale dull mouths the gimmel [ring] bit lies foul with chewed grass, still and motionless,—and their executors, the knavish crows, fly o’er them all, impatient for their hour,”—none the less, but all the more, would the Lowland farmer be kind to the jade, for auld lang syne.

Sir James Prior tells us, in his last year of the life of Burke, that a feeble old horse, which had been a favourite with young Richard—now dead—and his constant companion in all rural journeyings and sports, when both were alike healthful and vigorous, was turned out to take the run of the park at Beaconsfield for the remainder of his life, the servants being strictly charged not to ride or in any way molest him. This poor old worn-out steed it was that one day drew near to Burke, as the now childless and decrepit statesman was musing in the park, and after some moments of inspection, followed by seeming recollection and confidence, deliberately rested his head upon the old man’s bosom. “The singularity of the action, the remem-

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\* Totter.

brance of his dead son, its late master, and the apparent attachment and intelligence of the poor brute, as if it could sympathize with his inward sorrows, rushing at once into his mind, totally overpowered his firmness; and throwing his arms over its neck, he wept long and loudly." George Colman expatiates on the humanity of the once well-known Humphrey Morris, of Grove House, Turnham Green, whose mare Curious, almost a skeleton from old age, being turned of thirty, was tended with such noteworthy care, and so many indeed of whose horses enjoyed a luxurious sinecure; for during summer they were turned into his paddock, where in sultry weather they reposed beneath the shade of the trees, a boy being specially employed to flap the flies from their hides: the honours shown by Mr. Morris to his beasts of burden being pronounced inferior only to those which Caligula lavished on his charger. At Strathfieldsaye died of old age, in peace and plenty, that famous Copenhagen which carried "the Duke" at Waterloo, for fifteen hours without dismounting; there he passed the last ten years of his life in perfect freedom, there he was buried, and by his master's orders a salute was fired over his grave. The Duchess is said to have worn a bracelet made of Copenhagen's hair.

The late Mr. Assheton Smith's biographer duly notes that when his horses had grown old, or were no longer equal to their work, they were permitted to roam at large in the park, for their master never would sell an animal when worn out, to be subjected, as he said, to the chances of ill-treatment. We certainly ought not, pleads Plutarch, to treat living creatures like shoes or household goods, which, when worn out with use, we throw away; and were it only to learn benevolence to humankind, we should be merciful to other creatures. "For my own part," protests the fine old heathen—in

this respect, like Garth, the best good Christian he, although he knew it not,—“For my part, I would not sell even an old ox that had laboured for me.” John Howard writes home from the Lazaretto, himself sick and a prisoner : “Is my chaise-horse gone blind or spoiled ? Duke is well ; he must have his range when past his labour ; not doing such a cruel thing as I did with the old mare—I have a thousand times repented it.” The third Duke of Queensberry would never allow one of his old horses to be killed or sold : they enjoyed free range in some parks near Drumlanrig ; and when the Duke died, and his “heartless successor,” as he is called in Chambers’s *Traditions of Edinburgh*, put up for sale all these luckless pensioners, a painful sight it is said to have been, that of the feeble and pampered animals, forced by their new masters to drag carts and do rough service, till they broke down and died on the roads and in the ditches. Many a one among them might have stood, or staggered, for the picture Mr. Browning so graphically draws, in his *Childe Roland* :—

“One stiff blind horse, his every bone a-stare,  
 Stood stupefied, however he came there—  
 Thrust out past service from the devil’s stud.

“Alive ? he might be dead for all I know,  
 With that red gaunt and colloped neck a-strain,  
 And shut eyes underneath the rusty mane.  
 Seldom went such grotesqueness with such woe.”

The capital character-drawing of Squire Hamley, in *Wives and Daughters*, would not be complete without this characteristic, that his old carriage-horse Conqueror, turned out to grass as past regular work, used to come whinnying up to the park palings whenever he saw the Squire, who had always a piece of bread, or some sugar, or an apple, for the old favourite ; and would make many



a complaining speech to the dumb animal, telling him of the change of times since both were in their prime.

To be kind to these our fellow-lodgers is common humanity. To be cruel to them is to be below it. It is almost if not quite to be a little lower than themselves. In his essay on the exercise of benevolence, Sir Arthur Helps urges kindness to the whole animate creation as no unworthy part of it, while to such as we are masters of, for however short a time, we have positive duties to perform. This may seem too obvious to be insisted upon; but there are persons, as he says, who act as though they thought they could buy the right of ill-treating any of God's creation. It often occurs to Milverton, in going along the streets, how few men can be trusted with the whip even for animals. Elia's "inexplicable" cousin James took the whole animal world to be under his especial protection: a broken-winded or spur-galled horse was sure to find an advocate in him, and an over-loaded ass became his client for ever. Elia calls him admiringly "the apostle to the brute kind"—the never-failing friend of those who have none to care for them. The contemplation of a lobster boiled, or eels skinned alive, would wring him so, that "all for pity he could die." It would take the savour from his palate, and the rest from his pillow, for days and nights. Sir Walter Scott liked to quote his wife's indignant query whenever she saw a horse ill-used, What had the poor creature been guilty of in his state of pre-existence? Sir Walter himself would fain hope such present sufferers had been carters or hackney-coachmen, and were only experiencing a retort of the ill-usage they had formerly inflicted. We may be sure that Sir Arthur Helps is but making Milverton his very own spokesman when he moves him to the assertion, that never shall he be happy or comfortable

in this world while the lower animals are treated as they are ; and the friendliest of friends in council is humanely persuaded that his is not an exceptional case, but that there are tens of thousands of human beings who feel exactly as he does, and who, like him, if you were to amend all other evils, and yet resolve to leave this untouched, would not be satisfied. It is, he maintains, an immense responsibility that Providence has thrown upon us, in subjecting these sensitive creatures to our complete sway ; and he avowedly trembles at the thought of how poor an answer we shall have to give when asked the question how we have made use of the power entrusted to us over the brute creation. Earl Stanhope declared in his *History of England* his firm reliance on the progressive march of humanity, which in a barbarous age was confined to men of our religion, and within our own times extended only to men of our own colour, but which as time rolls on, he expressed his assurance, "will not be limited even to our kind ;" his assurance that we shall come to feel how much the brute-creation also is entitled to our sympathy and kindness, and that any needless or wanton suffering inflicted upon them will on every occasion arouse and be restrained by the public indignation and disgust. Cowper put heart and soul and strength into his lines on the penalties of dependence, in the case of creatures which, some in the fields of a human master, some at his crib, and some beneath his roof, too often prove at how dear a rate he sells protection. Witness the spaniel dying for some venial fault, "under dissection of the knotted scourge,"—and the patient ox, goaded on his way to the slaughter-house,—and the "flight-performing horse," who with such unsuspecting readiness takes

“ His murderer on his back, and pushed all day,  
With bleeding sides, and flanks that heave for life,  
To the far distant goal, arrives and dies.  
So little mercy shows who needs so much !  
Does law, so jealous in the cause of man,  
Denounce no doom on the delinquent ? None.  
He lives, and o'er his brimming beaker boasts  
(As if barbarity were high desert)  
The inglorious feat, and clamorous in praise  
Of the poor brute, seems wisely to suppose  
The honours of the matchless horse his own.  
But many a crime deemed innocent on earth  
Is registered in heaven, and these, no doubt,  
Have each their record, with a curse annexed.  
Man may dismiss compassion from his heart,  
But God will never.”

The question of interposing law has been a vexed one, upon which the humanest have sometimes differed, if not agreed to differ. Tickler, of the *Noctes*, who cordially confounds all cruelty to animals, yet questions the efficacy of law to protect the lower creation against the human, and would trust for that protection to the moral indignation of the people ; while Christopher North affirms the impossibility of defining cruelty to animals so as to bring it within the salutary operation of law, and is for every man taking the law into his own hands wherever he sees horse or ass unmercifully beaten. Many a brute biped had John Wilson levelled in the streets in this style, by his own avowal. On another of the Ambrosian Nights he starts anew the vexed question, and the Ettrick Shepherd at once professes to “ken naething about legislation,” but he does “ken something about humanity—and cruelty to the dumb creation is practical blasphemy, and will not go unpunished.” But he opines that it may be better to teach it down and preach it down,—Dr. Chalmers had then recently delivered his

celebrated sermon on cruelty to animals—than fine it down or imprison it down, after the method of Mr. Martin. Tickler suggests that habits of cruelty terminate almost of necessity in atrocious crimes; the carter who brutally flogs his horse will beat his wife. The Shepherd does put in a plea, however, for some “very puir blackguard” who perhaps has bought the living skeleton of a horse for half-a-crown, that he may get a week’s wear and tear out of it, and who “maun thump it, or it winna gang. The chiel may be sellin’ saut or bread, or some ither lawful eatables, and trying to mainteen a family. It’s a sair sicht to behold the raw and bloody skeleton—but what can ye do?” In the case of “a weelful hulkin fallow, savage, for nae reason at a’, against the beast intrusted to him,” the pastoral prescription simply is, “knock him down wi’ a stick or a stane aff the causeway—and if you fractur his skull, and he binna married, you’ve performed a good action, and by takin’ the law into your ain hand, done the State some service.” But on the other hand, so hard-headed and clear-headed and cool-headed a thinker as Mr. Stuart Mill is decisive and incisive in his arguments in favour of legal intervention. In the last chapter of his treatise on *Political Economy*, he declares it to have been by the grossest misunderstanding of the principles of liberty, that the infliction of exemplary punishment on ruffianism practised towards the defenceless lower animals has been treated as a meddling by Government with things beyond its province, an interference with domestic life. He asserts the domestic life of domestic tyrants to be one of the things which it is most imperative on the law to interfere with. He insists that what it would be the duty of a human being, possessed of the requisite physical strength, to prevent by force if attempted in



his presence, it cannot be less incumbent on society generally to suppress.

Super-sentimental Bernardin de Saint-Pierre gains upon one's confidence in the attitude in which one of his biographers depicts him, when, one day, "il s'avancait le poing fermé avec menace contre un charretier qui maltraitait un cheval." In the Diary of that pronounced lover of sport, Mr. Windham, we read,—the right honourable gentleman having taken shelter from the rain under a haystack in Chelsea (*tempora mutantur*): "Waterman boasting of cruelties practised on seals, under notion of fun. Reproved him, but not enough." We cannot live without destroying animals, says Horace Walpole, in one of his Letters; but shall we torture them for our sport—sport in their destruction? "One of the bravest and best men I ever knew, Sir Charles Wager, I have often heard declare he never killed a fly willingly." The question respecting the killing of animals Leigh Hunt takes to be soon settled with minds that are really willing to settle it, and not bent upon squaring their conclusions with their inclinations: if we kill them out of necessity and for our own life's sake, "it is what Nature evidently allows, and for the most part ordains; if we do it for sport, we are taking an unfair advantage of our superior faculties, and our reason rebukes us. We give unnecessary pain, and injure our humanity by taking an unhandsome pleasure." It is a point of honest pride with Cooper's typical Deerslayer, that he never pulled trigger on buck or doe, unless when food or clothes were wanting. Stoutly old Leather-stocking denounces the "wasty" ways of pigeon-shooting gentry as downright wicked: if a body, quoth he, has a craving for pigeon's flesh, why, it's made the same as all other creatures, for men's eating, but not to kill twenty



and eat one. "When I want such a thing, I go into the woods till I find one to my liking, and then I shoot him off the branches without touching a feather of another, though there might be a hundred on the same tree." Wordsworth's doctrine is comprehensive—

"Never to blend our pleasure or our pride  
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels."

Cowper would not enter on his list of friends the man, "though graced with polished manners and fine sense, yet wanting sensibility," who needlessly sets foot upon a worm. An inadvertent step, he reminds us, may crush the snail that crawls at evening in the public path, but he that has humanity, forewarned, will tread aside, and let the reptile live. The crawler in a private path Cowper's casuistry otherwise disposes of. The gentle influence of the Angel in the House upon her loyal laureate, in boyhood, involves this among other beneficent issues :

"For me, hence weak towards the weak,  
No more the unnested blackbird's shriek  
Startled the light-leaved wood ; on high  
Wander'd the gadding butterfly,  
Unscared by my flung cap ; the bee,  
Rifling the hollyhock in glee,  
Was no more trapp'd with his own flower,  
And for his honey slain."

Such a boy might La Fontaine accept as a bright particular exception to prove the rule of his verse, *Mais un fripon d'enfant (cet âge est sans pitié)*. Jean the fabulist was the very man of men to say ditto (in metre) to Bentham's averment, that it is as much a moral duty to regard the pleasures and pains of other animals as those of human beings. Morally speaking, cruelty to animals is by a later philosopher, equally free from sentimentalism, regarded as an indication of character almost worse than cruelty to men ; for there

is a brutal hardness of disposition displayed in bullying defenceless creatures which is a qualification for the worst crimes: "A boy who begins by torturing a cat is in as fair a road to the gallows as he can very well strike out, and it is long odds that a costermonger who will maltreat his donkey will also beat his wife." Cruelty to a cat was the occasion of an indignant letter from Robert Southey to certain "young gentlemen," a reading party from one of the Universities, who were spending "the long" of 1834 at Keswick, —*mis*spending it by a systematic purchase of cats for worrying purposes. Their sport, the laureate told them, was as blackguard as it was brutal. And his son tells how he has seen his cheek glow, and his eye darken and almost flash fire, when he chanced to witness anything of the kind,—and heard him administer a rebuke which made the offender tremble. Mr. Lecky's suggestion of a doubt whether cruelty to animals can be condemned on utilitarian grounds is met by the obvious answer that a utilitarian may rationally include in his definition of the greatest number whose happiness is to be the aim of human beings, not only human beings themselves, but all animals capable of being happy or the reverse; besides which it is urged that, even if we limit our view to the good of our own species, the argument is as strong as can be desired. "If the criminality of an action were to be measured simply by its direct effect on human happiness, we might probably hold that the murderer of a grown-up man was worse than the murderer of a child, and far worse than the torturer of a dumb animal. Yet, as a matter of fact, we should probably feel a greater loathing for a man who could deliberately torment a beast for his pleasure than for one who should ill-use one of his equals." For such cruelty is held

to indicate, as a rule, a baser nature : a murderer, though generally speaking a man of bad character, and at all events guilty of an unamiable weakness, is not of necessity cowardly or mean ; he may not improbably show some courage, and possibly even some sensibility to the nobler emotions. The tormentor of animals, on the other hand, shows callousness of nature, a pleasure in giving pain for the sake of giving pain, which has about it something only to be described as devilish. "The character which has become so debased as to be utterly insensible to the sight of pain in a helpless creature, or even to take pleasure in it, is certainly among the lowest conceivable types of humanity." An English reviewer of Burns has recently observed, that the "stupendous brutality which marks the very poor English people"—of course not universally, but as a class—in dealings with dumb animals, would not be what it is if the spirit of that poet had much of a grip upon them. "The cruelty of the majority of carters, cab-drivers, dog-trainers, and the like makes a sensitive man shudder to think of, as Hogarth's pictures of Cruelty make him sicken in looking at them." Not but that civilization is telling upon all classes as well as nations. It is some years ago that Mr. Théophile Gautier complimented England upon having for a long time past taken precedence of France in this good way ; but it gladdened him to be able at least to add that Englishmen were no longer laughed at by the French for their love of dogs and horses, "*thème ordinaire des caricatures de 1815.*" And he found encouragement in reporting progress from the dark ages, "*le moyen âge, dans ses ténèbres,*" when dumb animals were so often an object of fear, and their speaking eyes supposed to be lighted up with demoniacal malice. An eloquent essay-writer on

sympathy with Nature welcomes the change from loathing and terror, in the presence of hideous and monstrous shapes, to a cherished sense of gentle pity. John Foster declared it to be a great sin against moral taste to mention ludicrously, or for ludicrous comparison, circumstances in the animal world which are painful or distressing to the animals that are in them; the simile, for instance, "Like a toad under a harrow." It is increasingly seen and felt that these dumb and helpless things have a capacity for something which at least passes with them for pleasure. Who, it is asked, can forget, that has read it, the French poet's picture of the black venomous toad squatting meekly on the edge of its stagnant ditch on a summer evening, and relishing in its own humble way the calm of the surrounding scene? If there are plenty of people still to be found, as the essay asserts, who would scarcely feel that they were doing anything very wrong if they gave the poor monster a poke with a stick, or set a dog on to plague him, there are confessedly fewer people now of this "involuntary unreflecting devilishness" than there were a quarter of a century since, and the whole tendency of the modern spirit is to make such people fewer still, whatever may be the tendency of the modern spirit as regards the doctrine of Coleridge, that he prayeth well who loveth well both man and bird and beast.

"He prayeth best who loveth best  
All things both great and small;  
For the dear God that loveth us,  
He made and loveth all."



## XII.

### HOPE DEFERRED.

PROVERBS xiii. 12.

THE fulfilled desire when it cometh may be a tree of life, but, meanwhile, "hope deferred maketh the heart sick." It may verily have its reward, its exceeding great reward,—

"When Hope, long doubtful, soars at length sublime,"

as Scott phrases it in the *Lord of the Isles* ; but none the less the prolonged doubtfulness is a dispiriting influence. In his analysis of "the immediate emotions," Dr. Thomas Brown adverts to that weariness of mind which one would so gladly exchange for weariness of body, and which he takes to be perhaps more difficult to bear with good humour than many profound griefs, because it involves the uneasiness of hope, that is renewed every moment, to be every moment disappointed. He supposes a day's journey along one continuous avenue, where the uniformity of similar trees at similar distances is of itself most wearisome ; but what we should feel with far more fretfulness would be the constant disappointment of our expectation, that the last tree which we beheld in the distance, would be the last that was to rise upon us ; when, "tree after tree, as if in mockery of our very patience itself, would still continue to present the same dismal continuity of line." Lord Bolingbroke, a professed expert in its power to weary and wear out, called suspense the only insupportable misfortune of life. A Latin adage declares such as feed on hope, to exist in suspense, not live : *Qui spe aluntur, pendent, non vivunt*. What creature, exclaims Bosola, in Webster's *Duchess of*



*Malfi*, "ever fed worse than hoping Tantalus? nor ever died any man more fearfully than he that hoped for a pardon." Captain Marryat's weather-worn and time-tried Martin is fain to wish he dared hope as a sanguine younger hero can; and the wish is followed by his author's compassionating comment: "Poor Martin! he had long felt how bitter it was to meet disappointment after disappointment. How true it is, that hope deferred maketh the heart sick! and his anticipations of early days, the buoyant calculations of youth, had been one by one crushed; and now, having served his time [in the navy] nearly three times over, the reaction had become too painful, and as he truly said, he dared not hope." Perhaps in all history there is not a more salient instance of hoping against hope, against hope deferred, than that of Columbus. Years and years were wasted in irksome solicitation; years spent, not indeed in the drowsy and monotonous attendance of antechambers, but, as his foremost biographer narrates, amid scenes of peril and adventure, from his pursuit of which he was several times summoned to attend royal conferences, and anon dismissed abruptly, *re infectâ*. "Whenever the court had an interval of leisure and repose [from the exigencies of the Moorish war], there would again be manifested a disposition to consider his proposal, but the hurry and tempest would again return, and the question be again swept away." At intervals in the *Life and Voyages* we keep coming upon intimations of the sovereigns' unwillingness to close the door upon a project which might be productive of such important advantages; and then of their avowed want of means to engage in any new enterprise,—coupled with the hope, when the war should be over, of having time and means as well as inclination to treat with Columbus;—a starved reply to receive "after so many days of weary attendance, anxious expectation, and

deferred hope." He came to look upon these indefinite postponements as a mere courtly mode of evading his importunity; and after the rebuff in the summer of 1490, he is said to have renounced all further confidence in vague promises, which had so often led to chagrin; and giving up all hopes of countenance from the throne, he turned his back upon Seville, indignant at the thoughts of having been beguiled out of so many years of waning existence. But it is impossible not to admire, with his biographer, the great constancy of purpose and loftiness of spirit displayed by Columbus, ever since he had conceived the sublime idea of his discovery. When he applied again to the court at the time of the surrender of Granada, in 1492, more than eighteen years had elapsed since the announcement of his design, the greatest part of which time had been consumed in applications to various sovereigns,—poverty, neglect, ridicule, contumely, and the heart sickness of hope deferred, all that hitherto had come of it. Five years later, when preparations were afoot for his third voyage, we read of him, that "so wearied and disheartened did he become by the impediments thrown in his way," that he thought of abandoning his discoveries altogether. And the chapter in which Washington Irving relates the death of Columbus is introduced by a description of him "sinking under infirmity of body, heightened by that deferred hope which 'maketh the heart sick.' A little more delay, a little more disappointment, . . . and this loyal and generous heart would cease to beat." What Spenser had suffered at court the often cited lines from his *Mother Hubbard's Tale* too truly tell:—

"Full little knowest thou that hast not tryd,  
What hell it is in suing long to byde;  
To lose good days that might be better spent;  
To waste long nights in pensive discontent;

To speed to-day, to be put back to-morrow ;  
 To feed on hope, to pine with fear and sorrow ;

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To have thy asking, yet wait many years . . .  
 To eat thy heart with comfortless despairs."

So again with Cortez lingering at the court from week to week, and from month to month, beguiled by the deceitful hopes of the litigant, and tasting, as Prescott says, all that bitterness of the soul which arises from hope deferred. "I know it by myself," professes Don John in Beaumont and Fletcher, "there can be no hell to his that hangs upon his hopes." If we count them happy that endure, happier in some sense is he that has not had to endure too long, but warrants the felicitations of the poet in such a case,—

"Not yet too late breaks on thy morn the sun ;  
 Not yet deferred till Hope hath drooped too long  
 To plume the pinion, and to pour the song :  
 Hope—the sweet bird—while *that* the air can fill,  
 Let earth be ice, the soul has summer still !"

There is a true ring of feeling that may be felt, in *The Appeal* of George Beattie of Montrose :—

"Say, what is worse than black despair ?  
 'Tis that sick hope too weak for flying,  
 That plays at fast and loose with care,  
 And wastes a weary life in dying.  
 "Though promise be a welcome guest,  
 Yet it may be too late a comer ;  
 'Tis but a cuckoo voice at best—  
 The joy of spring, scarce heard in summer."

But is the feeling George Beattie's own, his very own ? For how comes it that these two verses are word for word the first two of *A Song* by Hartley Coleridge, long since published among that sweet singer's miscellaneous poems ?

A maiden in Southey's *Madoc in Wales* utters the plaintive query, with its homely, telling similitude,—

“ Have I not nursed for two long wretched years  
That miserable hope, which every day  
Grows weaker like a baby sick to death,  
Yet dearer for its weakness day by day ? ”

Mariana in the moated grange, as pictured by a later poet, is an embodied type of the sickening languor of hope deferred. She only said, “ The night is dreary, He cometh not,” she said ; she said, “ I am aweary, aweary, I would that I were dead ! ” Most she loathed the hour when the thick-moted sunbeam lay athwart the chambers, and the day was sloping toward his western bower, —another day as good as gone, and no arrival of the absentee yet. Then said she, with sadder emphasis and bitterer accent than ever, “ I am very dreary, He will not come,” she said. Was this to be her end, to live forgotten and die forlorn ? The Vanessa of Swift writes to him from Selbridge, in 1720, “ Solitude is insupportable to a mind which is not easy. I have worn out my days in sighing, and my nights with watching, and thinking of —, who thinks not of me. How many letters shall I send you before I receive an answer ? ” To Miss Vanhomrigh the Dean was present everywhere : his dear image was always before her eyes. But not Mariana pined more unavailingly for the absent Angelo, or was more heartsick with hope deferred. Mary Tudor yearning for the return of Philip of Spain is another example to the purpose. Most reluctantly had she consented to his departure, in 1555, and he left her with a “ faithful ” though enforced promise of a speedy return ; but “ the weeks went, and he did not come, and no longer spoke of coming.” When he summoned to him such of his Spanish suite as he had left behind,—a too sure token of his intentions as to a return,—the queen “ wept and remonstrated ; more piteous lamentations were never heard from woman.” In the words of François de Noailles,



cited by Mr. Froude, she felt old age stealing so fast upon her, that she could not endure thus to lose what she had bought so dearly. Next year, when Paget returned from Flanders with a letter instead of Philip, "the poor queen looked ten years older on the receipt of it." As with the weary waiting lady in Wordsworth,—

"Month falls on month with heavier weight;  
Day sickens round her, and the night  
Is empty of repose."

Mariana has a closer parallel in the Rydal bard's Margaret, the "Forsaken," who only prays to know the worst, and wishes as if her heart would burst :—

"O weary struggle ! silent years  
Tell seemingly no doubtful tale ;  
And yet they leave it short, and fears  
And hopes are strong and will prevail  
My calmest faith escapes not pain ;  
And, feeling that the hope is vain,  
I think that he will come again."

The Margaret of the *Excursion* is a masterly study—found sad and drooping by the narrator of her piteous history, after an interval of many months, for she had learned no tidings of her husband ; if he lived, she knew not that he lived ; if he were dead, she knew not he was dead. She might seem the same in person and appearance, but now her house bespoke a sleepy hand of negligence ; her garden was neglected and defaced by weeds ; and above all,

"—— her infant babe  
Had from his mother caught the trick of grief,  
And sighed among his playthings."

Nine tedious years she lingered in unquiet widowhood : a wife and widow. Needs must it have been a sore heart-wasting. Ofttimes she would sit alone for half the day beneath the porch,—



“And if a dog passed by, she still would quit  
The shade, and look abroad. On this old bench  
For hours she sate ; and evermore her eye  
Was busy in the distance, shaping things  
That made her heart beat quick.”

Meanwhile her poor hut sank to decay, and so she lived through the long winter, reckless and alone ; until her house by frost, and thaw, and rain, was sapped ; yet still she loved the wretched spot, nor would for worlds have parted from it ;

“ — and still that length of road,  
And this rude bench, one torturing hope endeared,  
Fast rooted at her heart ; and here . . .  
In sickness she remained ; and here she died,  
Last human tenant of these ruined walls.”

Crabbe's Ellen, in the *Tales of the Hall*, to whom, so long expectant, “no Cecil came,” is another of the book-noted sufferers from hope deferred :—

“With suffering mind the maid her prospects viewed,  
That hourly varied with the varying mood ;  
As passed the day, the week, the month, the year,  
The faint hope sickened, and gave place to fear.  
—No Cecil came.”

Lucilla, in *Godolphin*, is described holding an unquiet commune with her own passionate heart, by the borders of the lake whose silver quiet mocked the mind it had, in happier moments, reflected. She had dragged on the weary load of time throughout the winter, waiting and still waiting for a sign from the absentee ; and now the early and soft spring was already abroad—a season that hitherto had “possessed a mysterious and earnest attraction for Lucilla,” but now, all its voices were mute. Hope deferred had blighted her capacity for enjoyment, and now a tearful and spiritless dejection was her normal lot. “Day after day passed—no letter, or worse than none, and at length Lucilla became utterly impatient of

all rest ; a nervous fever possessed her ; the extreme solitude of the place filled her with that ineffable sensation of irritability which sometimes preludes the madness that has been produced in criminals by solitary confinement." Another Eminent Hand in the art and practice of fiction contrasts the position of a man who can go out into the world, and cut his way through the forest of difficulty, with that of a woman who finds herself in the midst of that dismal forest, and who can only sit at the door of her lonesome hut, looking out with weary eyes for the prince who is to come and rescue her ; and we are put in remembrance of the many women there are to whom the prince never comes, and who must needs die and be buried beneath that gloomy umbrage. Another draws the picture of a modern Mariana, changed from the bright, elastic, impetuous young beauty to a pale languid girl, with "weary of the world" painted on every part of her eloquent body ; her right hand dangling by her side, a piece of work on the ground, that has escaped from those listless fingers, her left arm stretched at full length on the table with an unspeakable *abandon*, and her brow laid wearily on it above the elbow. "So lies the wounded bird, so droops the broken lily." Another gives us, in a chapter headed "Watching and Waiting," a watchful waiter all aweary, gazing down the green vista before the house as the shadows deepen night after night ; and night after night the long summer twilight fades away, and the dews grow chill, and a dull soreness gathers and spreads about her heart, and what she looks for comes not. Or we might glance at the pining Marianne, Mariana's near namesake, of Miss Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*—busy observing the direction of the wind, watching the variations of the sky, and imagining an alteration in the air, all to speed her fancies touching the cause of deferred hope, and the remedy ; or at Rachel

Ray, never owning herself ill, but gradually becoming thin and wan and haggard, as time passes, and with constant disappointment she constantly watches for the postman ; or at Margaret Hall, looking wearily from behind the blind of the upper window in Cecil Street, till the city clocks chime midnight, and the aching heaviness of her eyes and brain makes her hope that forgetfulness is near at hand, though it is not ; or at Eleanor Vane, sickening with fruitless watching for her father's return, and thinking the quarters struck by the clocks in the distance of interminable length, though each longer than the last : the rattling of wheels on the boulevard is at an end ; daylight dawns—grey, cold morning, chill and dismal after the oppressive August night, and she stands now at the window, watching the empty street ; and as the day grows older and brighter, the anxious face of the pale watcher only grows paler and more anxious. Spenser's lines may apply to the Mariana type,—

“ And then, her grieve with errour to beguyle,  
 She fayn'd to count the time againe anew,  
 As if before she had not counted trew :  
 For houres, but dayes ; for weekes that passed were,  
 She told but moneths to make them seeme more few :  
 Yet, when she reckned them still drawing neare,  
 Each hour did seeme a moneth, and every moneth a yeare.”

And so, in their way, yet here a little and there a little out of their way, may those in *The New Timon*, descriptive of a case—

“ Where the heart, sick, despondent, tired with all,  
 Looks joyless round and sees the dungeon wall ;—  
 Where even God is silent, and the curse  
 Of stagnor settles on the universe ;—  
 When prayer is powerless, and one sense of dearth  
 Abysses all, save solitude, on earth.  
 So sate the bride : the drooping form, the eye  
 Vacant, yet fixed—that air which Misery,

The heart's Medusa, hardens into stone,  
Sculptured the Death which dwelleth in the lone."

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Grant that the fulfilment of a long-deferred hope is often as a tree of life, with leaves for the healing of the long heart-sickness ; yet, if too long deferred, the fruit is apt to be as apples of Sodom, Dead Sea fruit, dust and ashes in the mouth. All too true is the saying that there are so many blessings in this life that come too late ; many a vessel laden with the gold of Ophir nears the shore only when her owner lies dead upon the sands, or his heart is dead to the joys of the ship come home at last. When the artist, William Crawford, in the story, tasted the first-fruits of success, the wife, to have purchased whose happiness he would have sold his heart's blood, had been dead ten years. She had felt the cruel hand of poverty, and had withered under its bitter gripe, but had never complained,—bearing all meekly for her husband's sake. And now, when people offered him large prices for his pictures, he felt half inclined to refuse their commissions in utter sickness of heart. "You should have bought my 'Pyramus and Thisbe' twelve years ago," he would have cried. "A fifty-pound cheque would have done that for me then which all the kings and princes of the earth could not do now. It would have brought a smile to the face of my wife." So with the Panslavisco of a popular essayist. Panslavisco had as much genius, and played as learnedly, sweetly, gracefully, boldly, nervously, wildly, as he does now, we are told ; but he played in a garret, where he had no friends, no fire, no linen, no bread, and where his landlady bullied him for his rent. "Viragoes squabbling over a disputed right in a wash-tub in a back-slum have heard as fascinating harmonies through a garret-window held up by a bundle of firewood, as princesses of the blood hear now



in the Nineveh Rooms." Now, the tide of prosperity has set in for the musician : fortune, fame, sycophants to admire, beautiful women to smile, lords to say, " Come and dine." But they are all too late. They cannot bring back the young wife, dead in a long slow agony ; the little children who faded one by one ; they cannot " bring back the time when the man had a heart to love and hope, and was twenty-one years of age." Or glance, again, at Sir Arthur Helps's hero prince of the Lake City, Realmah, when he came to reign in the hearts of all his fellow-citizens as the man of their election. " Many a subdued and furtive sigh came from Realmah's heart, when he reflected that the one person whose delight in his success he would have cared for most, was numbered with the dead." The poet at his wife's grave thus gives vent to the thoughts within him :—

“ Oh, how I longed to set you like a queen,  
Above all sorrows in some happy place :  
To crown you with my triumphs, and efface  
The memory of such cares as came between  
Our most dear love. I could not stay your tears  
When critics blamed, or publishers said ‘ Nay ; ’  
Although I called myself more wise than they,  
And prophesied a harvest with the years.  
And now I stand among my sheaves alone,  
My golden sheaves ; that only make me weep  
To think I cannot wake you from your sleep.”

Very effectively done is Mr. Charles Reade's portraiture of the French Commandant Raynal, who has risen from the ranks, and counted on delighting his old mother, the grocer's widow, with his rank and with his savings, but gets a letter to tell him of her death the very day he is made commandant—a terrible blow to the simple rugged soldier, who had never much time or inclination " to flirt with a lot of girls, and touches his heart." So he came to Paris honoured and rich, but downcast. Here



had he been scraping all this dross together, and he would give it all to sit one hour by the fire, with her hand in his, and hear her say she had lived to be proud of him. "The day this epaulette was put on my shoulder in Italy, she died in Paris. Ah, how could you have the heart to do that, my old woman?" A rough way of putting the question, but with undoubted heart on the questioner's side ; heart's appeal to heart ; loving son's to lost mother's.

When the late Mr. Justice Maule, as a rising barrister, with briefs and fees coming in, returned from circuit to find his mother on her death-bed, the shock, we are told, was a severe one, for a keen sensibility was veiled under his blunt and independent manners, and he had always been devoted to his mother, the desire of pleasing whom had been his strongest motive for exertion ; and it has been plausibly suggested that the kind of moody indifference and somewhat cynical disregard of conventionalities which he afterwards displayed may be in some measure attributed to the effect of this loss.

Southey's pathetic lines are not now quoted by the present writer for the first time : \*

"Such consummation of my work will now  
Be but a mournful close, the One being gone  
Whom to have satisfied was still to me  
A pure reward, outweighing far all breath  
Of public praise."

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\* In the second volume of *Recreations of a Recluse*, pp. 308-320, may be found a variety of illustrations and parallel passages bearing on this theme.

### XIII.

#### *THE HEART'S OWN SECRET OF BITTERNESS.*

PROVERBS xiv. 10.

THE heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger no more compasseth it than he intermeddleth with his joy. Of Him to whom we consecrate the words, "Never sorrow was like His sorrow," the proverb holds good with an emphasis all its own. As the poet of the Christian Year sings of His tears over doomed Jerusalem,—

"But hero ne'er or saint  
The secret load might know,  
With which His spirit waxeth faint;  
His is a Saviour's woe."

But of every man in his degree the proverb holds good, at some point or other of his history, if not at very many points, and day by day continually.

"The world's a room of sickness, where each heart  
Knows its own anguish and unrest."

Every one, in the words of King Solomon's Temple dedication service, every one knows his own sore and his own grief. The tongue touches where the tooth aches, but the best dentist cannot guess at the truth unless one opens one's mouth, Riccabocca sententiously sayeth. We can detect, quoth Harley L'Estrange, when something is on the mind—some care, some fear, some trouble; but when the heart closes over its own more passionate sorrow, who can discover, who conjecture? It is true, observes a philosophic essayist, that we have all much in common; but what we have most in common is this—that we are all isolated. Man is more than a combination of passions common to his kind.

"Beyond them and behind them, an inner life, whose current we think we know within us, flows on in solitary stillness." Friendship itself is declared to have nothing in common with this dark sensibility, so repellent and so forbidding—much less may a stranger penetrate to those untrodden shores. We may apply Wordsworth's lines,

"—— To friendship let him turn  
For succour ; but perhaps he sits alone  
On stormy waters, tossed in a little boat  
That holds but him, and can contain no more."

Chateaubriand expatiates in his memoirs on the bitterness of a private grief which the multitude cannot understand, and which is therefore all the more keenly felt: "Contrasting it with other ills does not blunt the edge of the affliction. One can never be the judge of another's grief. . . . The hearts of men have divers secrets which are incomprehensible to other hearts." His practical application is, that we are not to dispute with others about the reality of their sufferings; it is with sorrows as with countries—each man has his own.

An old English divine remarks, in a passage which may otherwise be worth quoting, for the sake of its now obsolete use of the word *methodist*,—"All of us have some or other tender part of our souls which we cannot endure should be ungently touched; every one must be his own methodist to find them out."\* The term now appropriated by, or exclusively applied to, the followers of Wesley, once indicated those who were methodical in study, who employed a certain method in their philosophy and their practical ethics.

No saying is less heeded, Mr. Dallas affirms, than that of the heart solely cognizant of its own bitterness, though "no more pregnant saying was ever penned." We see

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\* Jackson, *Justifying Faith*, b. iv. c. 5.

each other glad or sad, he observes, but we do not understand the sources of each other's joy and misery; often we do not understand the sources of our own. Let any one study his own heart, says Professor H. Reed, and he will know that there are passions, whose very might and depth give them a sanctity which we instinctively recognize by veiling them from the gaze of others. "They are the sacred things of the temple of the human soul, and the common touch would only profane them." In childhood, indeed, tears are shed without restraint or disguise; but when the self-consciousness of manhood, as the professor puts it, has taught us that tears are the expression of those passions which are too sacred for exposure, "the heart will often in silence break rather than violate this admirable instinct of our nature." It knoweth its own bitterness, and to intermeddling of any stranger, however well-intentioned, its style is *Noli me tangere*. The suffering spirit cannot descend from its dignity of reticence, Mr. Trollope somewhere says; a consciousness in particular of undeserved woe produces a grandeur of its own, with which the high-souled sufferer will not easily part. Madame de Staël rules that *Nul a le droit de contester à un autre sa douleur*. There is much implied in that short sentence, writes Mrs. Richard Trench, who quotes it in support of her expression of impatience at hearing any one too decisive on what may or may not deeply wound the bosom of another.\*

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\* See a letter of hers to Mrs. Leadbeater (*Remains*, p. 284) on a mother's incommunicable grief in "losing her little blossom." The letters of Frederick Perthes iterate the proverb in regard of family bereavement. "Each father's and mother's heart knows its own bitterness, and no third person can enter into it." This he says in declining to gratify a friend's curiosity about the loss itself, and the character of the departed (his son Rudolph). On another occasion, and with another kind of reference, he writes: "No one



Grief for the dead has been said to take its most touching and attractive form when it chastens and refines a whole life, rather than when its poignancy disables the mourner from everyday duties; the reason of this being, that with acute and overwhelming afflictions there is no real, at least no adequate, sympathy. "The widow and the childless have sorrows into which none can enter, and, therefore, with which none can, in the truest sense, fully sympathize. It is as in death—we die and grieve alone." As there is no companionship in the grave, so is there none in that stage of bereavement where the whole world is as a tomb. "There seems to be something superhuman—something, at any rate, out of the range of ordinary sympathy—in the very aspect of a chilling and desolating grief," paralysing the mourner and the spectator too. It is justly observed, however, that not only are we not attracted, but we are apt to be almost repelled, by witnessing in our social relationships a spectacle of prolonged and agonizing sorrow :—because we cannot enter into it, we are tempted to stand aloof, if not to censure. "It is above us, and we cannot sympathize but with kindred natures. We almost judge it harshly, and call it selfish and overstrained. And herein we are generally wrong; we only misread the sentiment because we cannot understand it." In the pettiest character, says Canon Kingsley, there are unfathomable depths, which the poet, all-seeing though he may pretend to be, can never analyse, but at most only dimly guess at. There are feelings which have their silent agony, writes the author of *Violet*, for

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knows what a poor human heart feels, when such echoes of a vanished world would pierce his soul. The joy of meeting was mingled with grief; the joy I shared with others, and kept the grief to myself." So that in this case he exemplified only one of the clauses of Solomon's proverb.



they are among those which are never told ; or if they are, who can imagine the mental suffering that has been endured, from the mere force of the words in which those sufferings are told,—words that seem trifling in the ears of even an interested listener? “All of us perhaps have these sensations, but not one of us can enter into them when they are another’s. Of this truth we have an innate consciousness, and from this cause the minutiae of any individual’s unhappiness remain untold even to his most intimate friend.” The strongest heart, says George Eliot, will faint sometimes under the feeling that friends only know half its sorrows. As in the case of Mr. Tryan, while we are coldly discussing a man’s career, sneering at his mistakes, blaming his rashness, and labelling his opinions “evangelical and narrow,” or “latitudinarian and pantheistic,” or “Anglican and superstitious,”—that man, in his solitude, is perhaps shedding hot tears because his sacrifice is a hard one, because strength and patience are failing him to speak the difficult word and do the difficult deed. Charlotte Brontë, describing in a letter the pains a kindly and eminent physician took to understand her ailments and relieve her depression, adds: “but none—not the most skilful physician—can get at more than the outside of these things ; the heart knows its own bitterness, and the frame its own poverty, and the mind its own struggles.” For there are sorrows, where of necessity the soul must be its own support, says Wallenstein in Schiller. The Alonzo of Congreve’s *Mourning Bride* declares it to be

“ — a wretch’s comfort still to have  
 Some small reserve of near and inward woe,  
 Some unsuspected hoard of darling grief,  
 Which they unseen may wail, and weep, and mourn,  
 And, glutton-like, devour alone.”

Yet, if we may believe Mrs. Riddell, there is nothing which offends human nature so much as the loneliness of a fellow-creature; for although we lock our own doors, dry our own tears, smile our forced smiles, and talk our lightest words, when our fellows come near to probe the wounds we would cover away from sight, we are still angry and offended because they will not tell us of their ailments, because the cry of mortality in its bitterest anguish is ever, "Leave me with my God"—its most earnest prayer to its eager associates, that to be left alone—alone. Edward Quillinan in the English burial-ground at Oporto wears on his lip a smile, and teaches his voice a careless tone, and affects to sip lightly his cup of woe, "nor let its harsh contents be known;" for he will not droop to worldly eyes, as if his grief besought their pity, but breathes his lonely sighs within that solemn field of graves.

"For mine are woes that dwell apart,  
And human sympathy reject;  
Too sacred to the jealous heart  
To seek compassion's cold respect."

*Chacun sent son tourment et sait ce qu'il endure*, is one of a few extant lines by which La Boétie being dead yet speaketh. Nor be forgotten Shelley's Prince Athanase, when his friends babbled vain words and fond philosophy:

"—How it galled and bit  
His weary mind, this converse vain and cold;  
For, like an eyeless nightmare, grief did sit  
Upon his being; a snake which fold by fold  
Pressed out the life of life; a clinging fiend  
Which clenched him if he stirred with deadlier hold;—  
And so his grief remained—let it remain—untold."

#### XIV.

### *A DINNER OF HERBS AND GOOD FELLOW-SHIP.*

PROVERBS xv. 17.

THE Wise Man's maxim, in one chapter of Proverbs, that better is a simple dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred withal, has its parallel passage in another, which declares that better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than a house full of sacrifices, with strife. The meanest fare, as Bishop Patrick paraphrases the former text, if associated with the love of him who provides it, and with agreement and good feeling on the part of the guests, is "much better than the most sumptuous entertainments of him that hates us, or among those that quarrel." A man prone to wrath, the old expositor goes on to explain, will easily disturb the most peaceable company, being apt to quarrel for very trifles ; and that is bad for the digestion of all concerned. In Miss Austen's unfinished story of *The Watsons*, as the quietly sociable little meal of two of the sisters of that name concluded, the elder could not help observing how comfortably it had passed. "It is delightful to me," she said, "to have things going on in peace and good humour. Nobody can tell how much I hate quarrelling. Now, though we have had nothing but fried beef, how good it has all seemed." Dr. Thomas Brown expatiates, after his expansive manner, in one of his metaphysical lectures, on the necessity the most sensual feel, of collecting smiles around the table, to give a taste to their costly food, even though there be at the heart a sad conviction that the smiles are only the mimicry of good-will and kindness. But so essential,

our philosopher insists, is kindness to happiness, that even this very mimicry of it is more than can be abandoned; and he affirms that if all the gay faces of the guests around the festive board could, in an instant, be converted into statues, in that very instant the delight of him who spread the magnificence for the eyes of others, and caught a sort of shadowy gaiety from that cheerfulness, which had at least the appearance of social regard, would cease; and if any enjoyment at all were received, it would at the best be far less than that of the "labourer, in his coarser meal, when there is only simple fare upon the board, but affection in every heart that is round it, and social gladness in every eye." Spenser's Hermit entertains Prince Arthur and his friends on very plain fare, but in excellent taste and hearty good-will—

"Not with such forgèd shows as fitter beene  
For courting fooles that courtesies would faine,  
But with entire affection and appearance plaine.

"Yet was their fare but homely, such as hee  
Did use his feeble body to sustaine;  
The which full gladly they did take in glee,  
Such as it was, ne did of want complaine."

Daniel and his three companions in captivity feeding on pulse, and thriving on it, are an exemplary comment, in their way, on the proverbial dinner of herbs. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, appointed them a daily provision of his own royal meat, and of the wine which he drank. But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with this dainty fare; and he and the Three Children, as they are called, asked instead for pulse to eat, and water to drink. Better to them was a dinner of herbs, even day by day continually; and better for them, as the event seemed to prove, for their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat—



"Meats by the law unclean, or offered first  
To idols, those young Daniel could refuse."

So Milton's Tempter in the wilderness admits, in the course of his temptation of One who, at the close of his wilderness fasting of forty days' duration, is said to have dreamed, as appetite is wont to dream, of meats and drinks, nature's refreshment sweet, so that sometimes beside the brook of Cherith He stood with Elijah, and shared with him the food brought by the ravens with their horny beaks,—

"Or as a guest with Daniel at his pulse."

Extravagant enough is the supposition the same poet imputes to Comus, "If all the world should in a pet of temperance feed on pulse." Pettishness of any kind or degree would spoil outright the flavour of pulse, and indeed cancel its *raison d'être*, in so far as the dinner of herbs without strife has the proverbial preference; pulse in a pet were *not* better, perhaps, merely as pulse, and in spite of the pet.

Sir Thomas Browne discourseth eruditely on Daniel's declining "pagan commensation," and on his strictly making choice of leguminous food, the "gross diet of pulse;" thus making choice, our Christian physician contends, of "no improper diet to keep himself fair and plump," such is the nutritive and "impinguating faculty in pulses." And so was he "by this kind of diet sufficiently maintained in a fair and carnous state of body; and, accordingly, his picture not improperly drawn, that is, not meagre and lean, like Jeremy's, but plump and fair, answering to the most authentic draught of the Vatican, and the late German Luther's Bible." Old Cotta, in Pope, abuses the scriptural example to some purpose, economically speaking:

"What though, the use of barbarous spits forgot,  
His kitchen vied in coolness with his grot;



His court with nettles, moats with cresses stored,  
 With soups unbought and salads bless'd his board?  
 If Cotta lived on pulse, it was no more  
 Than Brahmins, saints, and sages did before."

That the children of the captivity, with palace fare at command, should think a dinner of herbs better,—that with sumptuous viands prepared for them, they should prefer pulse,—may well have "astonied" Nebuchadnezzar the king. Yet was he one day to go lower than pulse. Fresh from contemplating with vainglorious exultation the great Babylon he had built by the might of his power, and for the honour of his majesty, was he not driven from men, to have his dwelling with the beasts of the field, and to eat grass as oxen? As Chaucer points the moral and adorns the tale,—

"This king of kinges preu was and elate;  
 But sodeynly he left his dignite,  
 I-lik a best him semed for to be,  
 And eet hay as an oxe."

Nor is Spenser unmindful of him in the same attitude:

"There was that great proud king of Babylon,  
 That would compell all nations to adore  
 And him as onely God to call upon;  
 Till thro' celestial doome thrown out of dore,  
 Into an oxe he was transformed of yore."

Readers of Mr. Kingsley's *Hereward the Wake* may remember the crazed prince of Alboronia, between Cathay and the Mountains of the Moon, upon whom Dirk Hammerhand, the richest man in Walcheren, lights one evening, as he watches the herd of horses in the fen: a long lean man, clothed in ragged horse-skins, whinnying and neighing exactly like a horse, and then stooping to eat grass like one. Dirk advances with his staff, meditating a blow, but ere he can strike, the "man or horse" (for the former seems well-nigh merged or embruted in the latter), kicks up with its hind legs in his face, and

then springing on to the said hind legs runs away with extraordinary swiftness some fifty yards ; and then goes down on all fours and begins grazing again.

“The Syrian king to beasts was headlong thrown,  
Ere to himself he could be mortal known,”

is Waller's memento\* of Nebuchadnezzar out at grass. The great St. Ephrem composed a panegyric on those *βόσκοι*, or grazing monks, of whom Gibbon makes mention, as of a numerous sect of Anachorets who derived their name from their humble practice of grazing in the fields of Mesopotamia with the common herd. The history of Nebuchadnezzar was eagerly alleged in support of the possibility of lycanthropy, by believers in that transformation of witches into wolves. Professor Rawlinson, by the way, accounts for the apparent silence kept by Berosus and Abydenus on the subject of the king's mysterious malady, by suggesting that the native writers could not be expected to tarnish their country's greatest monarch by any mention of an affliction which was of so strange and debasing a character. Indeed he may not have been aware of it, the professor contends ; for, as Nebuchadnezzar outlived his affliction, and was again “established in his kingdom,” all monuments belonging to the time of his malady would have been subject to his own revision ; and if any record of it was allowed to descend to posterity, care would have been taken that the truth was not made too plain, by couching the record, as the Bampton Lecturer surmises, in sufficiently ambiguous phraseology. One passage† in what

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\* Béranger gives full play to his irreverence when he *chante un roi devenu bœuf*, in the person of *Nabuchodonosor* (1821).

† When the monarch relates that during some considerable time—four years apparently—all his great works were at a stand : “he did not build high places ; he did not lay up treasures ; he did not sing the praises of his Lord, Merodach ; he did not offer him sacri-

is known as the "Standard Inscription" is supposed to contain the royal version of that remarkable story with which Daniel ends his notice of the great Chaldæan king.

The learned and virtuous Abarbanel, a Jewish authority of the highest rank, has left on record in his account of the sufferings of his countrymen and contemporaries who were expelled from Spain, this piteous circumstance in the story of their migration to the neighbourhood of Fez, which town they were forbidden to enter, lest they might cause a famine there : they had to encamp on the sandy plain, and were fain to live on the scanty grass of the field, "happy," says Abarbanel, "if the grass had been plentiful ;" yet, even in this state, religiously avoiding the violation of their Sabbath by plucking the grass with their hands, but grovelling (like the great king of Babylon) on their knees, and cropping it with their teeth. Anson's spectre crew, in their dread experiences and extreme privations among the rocks of Tierra del Fuego, were fain to eat grass for awhile.

The royal Chaldæan's malady has been made matter for mirth by many who have either disbelieved the story outright, or have thought any calamity fair game for levity and badinage. Under a supposed exigency of dinner conversation a rather "horsey" gentleman is said to have plied Bishop Blomfield with the question, "How long he *really* thought it would take to get Nebuchadnezzar into fair condition after bringing him up from grass?" Byron has a stanza beginning,—

fice ; he did not keep up the works of irrigation." The cause of this suspension, at once of religious worship and of works of utility, is stated in the document in phrases of such obscurity as to be unintelligible. Hence Professor Rawlinson's suggestion that, until a better explanation is offered, this passage may be probably regarded as a parallel to Daniel's plainer narrative. See his Bampton Lectures for 1859.

"Babel was Nimrod's hunting seat, and then  
 A town of gardens, walls, and wealth amazing,  
 Where Nebuchadonozor, king of men,  
 Reign'd, till one summer's day he took to grazing."

Father Prout has a lyric, in one of the *Watergrass Carousals*, about "King Nebuchadnezzar, who was turned for his sins to a grazier." And so on with others. For it is not even every clerical poet or poetaster who is serious enough to moralize his strain on such a subject, after the manner of Young, when that avowedly Complaining bard, heavy with night thoughts, exclaims,—

"What though our passions are run mad, and stoop  
 Like the proud Eastern, struck by Providence,  
 With low, terrestrial appetite, to graze  
 On trash, on toys, dethroned from high desire !"

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But let us so far revert to the topic of a dinner of herbs and good fellowship, as to make it the starting-point for an excursus on the merits of plain living when co-existent with high thinking, be that high thinking due to genial companionship with high thinkers, simple and unexacting in their tastes at table, or to aids less comprehensively social, even to a faculty purely individual.

Fresh from a tour on the Continent in 1802, Wordsworth could not, by his own account, on his return to London, but be struck with the vanity and parade of our own country, especially in great towns and cities, as contrasted with the aspect of things abroad. Hence his Sonnet, written in September of that year, expressing a profound regret to think 'that now our life is only drest for show ; mean handywork of craftsman, cook, or groom :'

"We must run glittering like a brook  
 In the open sunshine, or we are unblest :  
 The wealthiest man among us is the best :  
 No grandeur now in nature or in book



Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,  
 This is idolatry; and these we adore :  
 Plain living and high thinking are no more."

Five years after that was written, the most fervent and keenly appreciative of Wordsworth's admirers visited him for the first time, at that little cottage by Grasmere which was afterwards, for long and happy years, to become the visitor's own abode. He found the poet's sister making breakfast in the tiny sitting-room. "No urn was there; no glittering breakfast service; a kettle boiled upon the fire, and everything was in harmony with these unpretending arrangements." The visitor assures us he had seldom seen so humble a ménage; and contrasting the dignity of the man with this honourable poverty, and this courageous avowal of it, the utter absence of all effort to disguise the simple truth of the case, he felt his admiration increased. "This," thought I to myself, "is, indeed, in his own words, 'plain living and high thinking.' This is, indeed, to reserve the humility and the parsimonies of life for its bodily enjoyments, and to apply its lavishness and its luxury to its enjoyments of the intellect." So, he thought, might Milton have lived; so Marvel.

Philosophy, by Shenstone's computation,

" — requires

No lavish cost; to crown its utmost prayer  
 Suffice the root-built cell, the simple fleece,  
 The juicy viand, and the crystal stream."

Pastoral poetry—sometimes pseudo-pastoral, or singing *falsetto*—abounds in sentiments like that of the Shepherd's Song in Heywood :

"Those that delight in dainties' store,  
 One stomach feeds at once, no more;  
 And when with homely fare we feast,  
 With us it doth as well digest;  
 And many times we better speed,  
 For our wild fruits no surfeits breed."



Mrs. Schimmelpenninck, the pious and accomplished authoress of *Select Memoirs of Port Royal*, relates with complacency her cherished preference, as a child, of brown bread and honey suppers with old Mrs. Matthews, in the study, to costlier treats in less "studious" surroundings. "One day Lady Scott laughed at me for going to what she thought so poor a treat. She told me, if I would visit her at Boulogne I should have a very different supper. She then enumerated a great number of nice and splendid things she thought I should like; after which she asked me if I would rather sup with old Mrs. Matthews on brown bread, or with her on these dainties. I stopped a moment, because I felt it was kind of her to ask me, and then I replied, 'With Mrs. Matthews.' She asked, 'Why?' I answered, proudly, 'Because I had rather sup with Fabricius than Lucullus.'"

Among other things for which Burns invokes a blessing on the memory of his father—by all accounts a most worthy and exemplary man—is this: that he impressed on his children "the sentiment, that nothing was more unworthy in the character of a man, than that his happiness should in the least depend on what he should eat and drink." To have seen the venerable Bishop Skinner at his cottage-parsonage, a biographer of Burns desiderates for that poet, on the ground that it would have been a lesson of religious contentment that could scarcely have failed to touch and improve his spirit. He would, it seems, have found the old prelate living in what was literally a cottage—what is called in Scotland *a but and a ben*—with earthen floors and grateless fireplaces, not enjoying an income equal to that of a foreman in a common workshop, yet cheerful, and even mirthful, and the centre of a family circle accomplished and refined. One of the Ayrshire bard's correspondents thus writes to him concerning another exemplar to the

purpose: "Well, what do you think of good Lady Clackmannan? Her house is a specimen of the mansions of our gentry of the last age, when hospitality and elevation of mind were conspicuous amidst plain fare and plain furniture." The sentence reads like an expanded paraphrase of Wordsworth's pithy *plain living and high thinking*.

Of William Hunter it is on record, that when he invited his younger friends to his table they were seldom regaled with more than two dishes; when alone, he rarely sat down to more than one: he would say, "A man who cannot dine on this deserves no dinner." Quite after his ideal of the Happy Man would be that portrayed in contemporary verse, as one in whose household reign peace, order, comfort, and who seeks no more than these; whose

"—— mansion, furnished in no costly style,  
Oft makes his tasty neighbours stare and smile;  
But that unmoved and unavenged he bears,  
Unless it be, sometimes to stare at theirs;"

who envies not, nor thinks of purchasing, their costly chairs and tables and draperies, carpets, vases, mirrors,—

"Cupids that wave their waxen flames in air,  
Sideboards of plate, cut-glass, and china ware—  
These things he sees, and oh, surprising phlegm!  
Wastes not a wish or thought for one of them.  
Still more surprising, that his house and board  
Are plainer far than he could well afford.  
No seasoned dainties on his tables steal;  
Frugal, though ample, is the daily meal.  
The bairns around in graceful order sit;  
No greedy hands implore the savoury bit;  
Taught from the very cradle to despise  
The wish for more than hunger's claim supplies.  
A pampered body and a vigorous mind  
Are things, he deems, that cannot be combined;  
And aiming thus the mental strings to brace,  
He rears a hardy, independent race."

There are some who think it good policy to assume this virtue, if they have it not. Perhaps, out of sheer complaisance and with lip-deep courtesy, they profess, like Scott's Lord-Keeper amid the ill-veiled penury at Wolf's Crag, to delight in the simplicity of "Mr. Balderstone's bachelor's meal," and to be rather disgusted than pleased with the display on their own groaning board. "We do these things because others do them ; but I was bred a plain man at my father's frugal table, and I should like well would my wife and family permit me to return to my sowens and my poor man-of-mutton."\*

Dr. Holmes satirizes such sham philosophy in his stanzas on Contentment, where, for instance, the professed Plain Liver declares,

"Plain food is quite enough for me ;  
Three courses are as good as ten ;—  
If Nature can subsist on three,  
Thank Heaven for three. Amen !  
I always thought cold victual nice ;—  
My *choice* would be vanilla-ice.

It requires the candour of a Charles Lamb to quote Coleridge's assertion that a man cannot have a pure mind who refuses apple-dumplings, and append his own avowal, that with the decay of his first innocence he has a less and less relish daily for those innocuous cates. Elia could never have iterated, as Mr. Carlyle does, with admiring emphasis, this characteristic of the Dictator of Paraguay : "A grown man, like this Doctor Francia, wants nothing, as I am assured, but three cigars daily, a cup of maté, and four ounces of butchers' meat with brown bread." But Doctor Francia was a man to remind us of old Greece and Rome—notwithstanding the cigars.

Plutarch tells us that while the Thebans with grateful

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\* *I. e.*, the blade-bone of a shoulder of mutton ; so called in Scotland, as in some parts of England it is called "a poor knight of Windsor," in contrast, Scott presumes, to the baronial Sir Loin.

hearts enjoyed the liberality and munificence of Pelopidas, Epaminondas alone could not be persuaded to share in it. Pelopidas, however, is expressly said to have shared in the poverty of his friend, "glorying in a plainness of dress and slenderness of diet," and regarding it as a disgrace to expend more upon his own person than the poorest Theban. "As for Epaminondas, poverty was his inheritance, and therefore familiar to him; but he made it still more light and easy by philosophy [Wordsworth's *high thinking*], and by the uniform simplicity of his life" [Wordsworth's *plain living*].

Epicurus himself not only insisted on the necessity of moderation for continued enjoyment, but also, as his biographers show, he slighted, and somewhat scorned, all exquisite indulgences. "He fed moderately and plainly. Without interdicting luxuries, he saw that pleasure was purer and more enduring if luxuries were dispensed with." It was upon this ground, we are reminded, that Cynics and Stoics built their own exaggerated systems: they, too, saw that simplicity was preferable to luxury; but they pushed their notion too far. Zeno, though of a fragile constitution, lived to a great age, being rigidly abstemious, his food consisting mainly of figs, bread, and honey. And Persius records, as Englished by Dr. Brewster,

"—— what wise, what wholesome truths  
The Porch delivers to the listening youths;  
These shorn disciples studious vigils keep,  
And wisdom's midnight page prefer to sleep:  
With humble husks of pease and beans are fed,  
And taste no richer luxury than bread."

To which picture, however, a parallel might be cited from the account given of English University fare, midway in the sixteenth century, by Thomas Lever, afterwards Master of St. John's College, Cambridge. He describes the undergraduates—"divers of them," at least

—as rising daily between four and five o'clock, and spending the time between then and the dinner hour in chapel, private study, and the lecture-room : "At ten of the clock they go to dinner ; whereat they be content with a penny piece of beef amongst four, having a few pottage made of the broth of the same beef, with salt and oatmeal, and nothing else. After this slender dinner, they be either teaching or learning until five of the clock in the evening, when they have a supper not much better than their dinner. Immediately after which they go either to reasoning in problems, or unto some other study, until it be nine or ten of the clock ; and then, being without fire, are fain to walk or run up and down half an hour, to get a heat on their feet, when they go to bed." These simple students of the sixteenth century, with all their mathematical and arithmetical attainments, could scarcely have helped a poet of the nineteenth century much, in his bewilderment at the statistics of high living and its results :

"The mind is lost in mighty contemplation  
Of intellect expended on two courses ;  
And indigestion's grand multiplication  
Requires arithmetic beyond my forces.  
Who would suppose, from Adam's simple ration,  
That cookery could have called forth such resources,  
As form a science and a nomenclature  
From out the commonest demands of nature ?"

Noteworthy among the Roman emperors for the plainest of plain living, if not the highest of high thinking, is Alexander Severus. His table, as we read in Gibbon, was served with the most frugal simplicity ; and whenever he was at liberty to consult his own inclination, the company consisted of a few select friends, men of learning and virtue, amongst whom Ulpian was constantly invited. So again, but in a more advanced degree,



with Julian, whom the same historian describes as despising the honours and renouncing the pleasures, while discharging with incessant diligence the duties, of his exalted station ; and we are assured that few among his subjects would have consented to relieve him of the weight of his diadem, had they been obliged to submit their time and their actions to the rigorous laws which the philosophic emperor imposed on himself. Libanius, one of his most intimate friends, and a frequent sharer in the frugal simplicity of his table, maintains that his light and sparing diet (which was usually of the vegetable kind) left his mind and body always free and active for his multifarious duties. "While his ministers reposed, the prince flew with agility from one labour to another, and after a hasty dinner, retired into his library, till the public business, which he had appointed for the evening, summoned him to interrupt the prosecution of his studies. The supper of the emperor was still less substantial than the former meal ; his sleep was never clouded by the fumes of indigestion." Dante reminds us, from sacred story, how

" — Daniel fed

On pulse, and wisdom gained. The primal age  
Was beautiful as gold, and hunger then  
Made acorns tasteful ; thirst, each rivulet  
Run nectar. Honey and locusts were the food  
Whereon the Baptist in the wilderness  
Fed, and that eminence of glory reached  
And greatness, which th' Evangelist records."

An Eastern scholar, adverting to the "sweet and simple life lived in Galilee," observes, by the way, that cold climates, by compelling man to a perpetual contest with external nature, cause too much value to be attached to researches after comfort and luxury ; while, on the other hand, the countries which awaken few desires are the countries of idealism, and there the accessories of life

are insignificant compared with the pleasure of living. "The embellishment of the house is superfluous, for it is frequented as little as possible. The strong and regular food of less generous climates would be considered heavy and disagreeable." Economy in the Western world is commended by an American essayist when its aim is grand, when it is the prudence of simple tastes, and is practised for freedom, or love, or devotion. But he objects that much of the economy we see in houses is of a base origin, and is best kept out of sight. "Parched corn eaten to-day that I may have roast fowl to my dinner on Sunday, is a baseness;" but parched corn, and a house with one apartment, that the man may be free of all perturbations of mind, serene and docile to instruction from above, "is frugality for gods and heroes." It was a hard, griping poverty that we know Spinoza to have endured. Accounts of his expenditure were found among his papers after his death. One day he eats nothing but "*a soupe au lait*, with a little butter, which cost about three halfpence, and a pot of beer, which cost three farthings more." Another day he lives on a basin of gruel, with some butter and raisins, which cost him twopence-halfpenny. "And," says the pastor Colérus, quoted by Mr. Lewes, "although often invited out to dinner, he preferred the scanty meal that he found at home, to dining sumptuously at the expense of another." As he has been charged, among other indictments, with systematic Epicureanism, this illustration of his plain living, at the rate of twopence-halfpenny per diem, is worthy of record.

Habitual preference of simple fare is characteristic of some distinguished men, though occasionally affected only, and preached by them on principle rather than practised in daily life. Dryden made a point of dining in the simplest manner. In a letter to an inviting friend

he says, "As for the rarities you promise, if beggars might be choosers, a part of a chine of honest bacon would please my appetite better than all the marrow puddings; for I like them better plain, having a very vulgar stomach." Addison closes a *Tatler*, descriptive of a luxurious repast, overdone with ingenuities of cook and confectioner's art, with this significant paragraph: "As soon as this show was over, I took my leave, that I might finish my dinner at my own house: for as I in everything love what is simple and natural, so particularly in my food; two plain dishes, with two or three good-natured, cheerful, ingenious friends, would make me more pleased and vain than all that pomp and luxury can bestow. For it is my maxim, 'That he keeps the greatest table who has the most valuable company at it.'" It is pity, however, Mr. Walker, of the *Original*, feelingly complains, that one never sees luxuries and simplicity go together, and that people cannot understand that woodcocks and champagne are just as simple as fried bacon and small beer, or a haunch of venison as a leg of mutton, and that with true delicacies there is always so much alloy as to take away the true relish.

But to revert, with one last glance, to the more immediate scope of our proverb-text. And be the glance at poor good-natured Lady Clavering, who had her appetite and good-nature so sadly tried by constant family grievances, and disputes such as make the efforts of the best French cook unpalatable, and the most delicately-stuffed sofa-cushion hard to lie on.\*

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\* "I'd rather have a turnip for dessert, than that pineapple, and all them Muscatel grapes, from Clavering," said poor Lady Clavering, at her dinner-table, "if I could but have a little quiet to eat it with."—*Pendennis*, chap. lix.

## XV.

### *INTOLERANT OF REPROOF.*

PROVERBS xv. 31, 32.

THE ear that heareth the reproof of life is said by the Wise King to abide among the wise. He that heareth reproof getteth understanding; but "he that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul." They who would hear none of Wisdom's counsel, but despised all her reproof; they who set at nought all her counsel, and would none of her reproof; against them her sentence goeth forth, and this it is—that they shall eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For them is it reserved to mourn at the last, when flesh and body are consumed, and to say with all the poignancy of belated regret, "How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof!" Poverty and shame are the foredoomed lot of him that refuseth instruction; while he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured. "A fool despiseth his father's instruction; but he that regardeth reproof is prudent." Prudence is of high esteem in the Book of Proverbs; and one exercise of it is significantly advised, in refraining from reproof where it is sure to be taken ill: "He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame; and he that rebuketh a wicked man getteth himself a blot." It is all very well to "rebuke a wise man," for "he will love thee;" but the cautious counsel of the royal expert is, "Reprove not a scorner lest he hate thee." Whoso considereth his own comfort and ease will beware of the very thankless task of the censor, when it is a wolf he is taking by the ears, or a wasp by the waist.

When Cardinal Borromeo was put in mind of any



fault, he would express, what he actually felt, the most sincere gratitude; and he is known to have given a commission to two "prudent and religious clergy" of his household, to remind him of anything they saw amiss in his actions; and he used frequently to request the same favour of strangers. But then he was a saint of extra-canonical saintliness; as remarkable for sincerity as for charity; simply and singly in earnest, alike in dealing with himself and with others. He had laid to heart the spirit, if not learnt by heart the letter, of the mediæval proverb, rich in rhymes and reason,—

"Argue consultum, te diliget; argue stultum,  
Avertet vultum, nec te dimittet inultum."

The very thing which, as Feltham says, a proud man, and an angry one, stand most in need of to correct their failings, they are most in want of; and that is, the reprehension of a friend. "Pride scorns a corrector, and thinks it a disparagement to learn: and Choler admits of no counsel which crosses him; crossing angers him, and the cholerick man's anger blinds him;—so that if ever such hear of any fault, it must either be from an enemy, or from a friend who must make up his mind to lose them by it." South describes certain passionate dispositions, impatient of reproof, as "more raging and tumultuous than the sea itself, so that if Christ Himself should rebuke them, instead of being calm, they would rage and roar so much the louder." The admonition, that would reclaim others, but provokes them; as the same breath of wind, that cools some things, kindles and inflames others. "No sooner do some hear their behaviour taxed, though with the greatest tenderness and moderation, but their choler begins to boil, and their breast is scarce able to contain and keep it from running over into the heights and furies of bitterness and impatience." Dr. South refers to the case of Nabal, to



whom it was surely of very great importance to be admonished of the "rough unadvised answer that he returned to David's soldiers," as this was like to have brought ruin upon him and his; yet none would do Nabal that seasonable kindness, because of the rudeness and churlishness of his manners; for he "was such a son of Belial, that a man could not speak to him."

The complaint of Cassius is,—

"A friend should bear his friend's infirmities,  
But Brutus makes mine greater than they are.

*Bru.* I do not, till you practise them on me.

*Cas.* You love me not.

*Bru.* I do not like your faults.

*Cas.* A friendly eye would never see such faults.

*Bru.* A flatterer's would not, though they do appear  
As huge as high Olympus."

In one of his letters to Mrs. Pilkington, Dean Swift tells her, that if she cannot take a chiding she will quickly be out of his sphere. "Corrigible people are to be chid; those who are otherwise may be very safe from any lectures of mine; I should rather indulge them in their follies than attempt to set them right." Many years before that, he had written in a tenderer tone to Stella, finding fault that she would not be found fault with :—

"Your spirits kindle to a flame,  
Moved with the lightest touch of blame;  
And when a friend in kindness tries  
To show you where your error lies,  
Conviction does but more incense;  
Perverseness is your whole defence."

Very different was the tone of Burns to Clarinda. Let her not tell him she is pleased when her friends inform her of her faults. He is ignorant what these are; but he is sure they must be such "evanescent trifles" compared with her good qualities, that he would despise the ungenerous narrow soul who could notice any shadow of

imperfections she might seem to have in any other way than in the most delicate agreeable raillery. "Coarse minds are not aware how much they injure the keenly feeling tie of bosom-friendship, when in their foolish officiousness they mention what nobody cares for recollecting. People of nice sensibility and generous minds have a certain intrinsic dignity, that fires at being trifled with, or lowered, or even too nearly approached." Dr. Andrew Combe held decided views on the inexpediency of friends becoming direct censors of each other's faults. His impression was, after much thinking over the subject, and some experience to guide him, that we exert a more healthful and permanent influence on another by giving every possible encouragement to the good parts of his character, than by direct notice of the bad; and that by thus strengthening the good we give him a more discerning "perception of his own failings," and a greater control over them, than we can ever ensure by merely counselling him directly against his errors. In proportion as a monitor within exceeds in weight and authority a monitor without, does the one method, in Dr. Combe's estimate, excel the other. Then, again, it is very difficult, he contends, for two friends to preserve thorough confidence in each other after the direct notice of faults. "In spite of our best endeavours, a feeling, however slight, of mortification creeps in to disturb the permanence of the influence; and though the fault may be corrected, that feeling may destroy the future power of the counsellor to benefit his friend." Not but that the good doctor approves direct censure on the part of guardians of youth, where the censor possesses a natural authority over the other, and to which the other *feels* himself naturally subject. But among equals in age he doubted the propriety or benefit of the direct naming of faults. The co-eval is apt to wince under the infliction

of the mildest exhortation, even, after the manner of the recluse in Wordsworth,—

“Shrinking from admonition, like a man  
Who feels that to exhort is to reproach.”

Perthes writes to his friend Nessig on the subject of his relations with Frederika, “I have been long thinking how I can write to her an affectionate letter of advice; but though you may let a girl *feel* that you think her wrong, and although she is quite conscious of it, yet you must not venture to *say* it.” Goldsmith’s citizen of the world wastes his pains in compliance with the whim of “a lady who usually teased all her acquaintance in desiring to be told of her faults, and then never mended any.” Chesterfield was so entirely convinced of the greater readiness of people in general to be told of their vices or crimes than of their little failings and weaknesses, that although he had been, he said, intimate enough with several people to tell them they had said or done a very criminal thing, he never was intimate enough with any man to tell him very seriously that he had said or done a very foolish one. He more than once urges his son to beg of the half-dozen real persons of quality with whom he associates, that they will correct him, without reserve, wherever they see him fail, assuring them that he will take such admonitions as the strongest proofs of their friendship. “If any one can convince me of an error,” professes Marcus Antoninus in his Meditations, “I shall be very glad to change my opinion, for truth is my business, and right information hurts no one.” And in a later section he eulogizes his adoptive father, Antoninus Pius, for giving his courtiers all the freedom imaginable to contradict him and set him right. The mother of Mrs. Schimmelpenninck used to tell her that none could be without faults, but that she wished her child to be like Elzevir, who, as fast as

he printed a sheet, put it up at his window, offering a reward to any one who could find a single mistake. Elzevir was much beloved, and the many real friends he possessed made a point of diligently looking out for every error, and, thanks to their kindness, his editions secured the reputation of being the least faulty in the world.

“Fear not the anger of the wise to raise;  
Those best can bear reproof who merit praise.”

There are a few people in the world, it is conceded, who relish unpalatable truths : they have a sort of itch for being criticized, provided always that things do not get too earnest, and that the quick is not touched. “Mais quand on a le goût faux, c’est une triste qualité que d’être sincère,” Araminte says in Marivaux’ comedy of *Les Sincères*. “I must touch upon the foibles of my kinswoman with a gentle hand,” writes Elia in the delightful essay on Mackery End, “for Bridget does not like to be told of her faults.” Not that she was of the aggressive and recalcitrant type of the Wife of Bath, who so candidly confesses that

“——— whoe’er he be  
That tells my faults, I hate him mortally :  
And so do numbers more, I’ll boldly say,  
Men, women, clergy—regular and lay.”

The navy offers such another type in Admiral Russell, whom Macaulay describes as resenting reproof, however gentle, as an outrage. Crabbe’s strolling player is another example from another sphere of action :—

“Then too the temper, the unbending pride  
Of this ally would no reproof abide.”

Swift gives an epigrammatic reason why a man should never be ashamed to own he has been in the wrong—for it is but saying, in other words, that he is wiser to-day



than he was yesterday. But it is so disagreeable, as Adam Smith muses, to think ill of ourselves, that we often purposely turn away our view from whatever would ensure that unfavourable judgment. And as he is said to be a bold surgeon whose hand does not tremble when he performs an operation upon his own person, so is he often equally bold, in Dr. Adam's opinion, "who does not hesitate to pull off the mysterious veil of self-delusion, which covers from his view the deformities of his own conduct." Rather than see our own behaviour under so disagreeable an aspect, we too often, foolishly and weakly, "endeavour to exasperate anew those unjust passions which formerly misled us,"—perhaps persevere in injustice, merely because, having once been unjust, we are ashamed and afraid to see and to say that we were so. Nay, discreet worthy people, according to Hazlitt, readily surrender the happiness of their whole lives, sooner than give up an opinion to which they have committed themselves, though in all likelihood it was the mere turn of a feather which side they should take in the argument. In a controversy both parties will commonly go too far, Archdeacon Hare remarks; would you have your adversary give up his error? be beforehand with him, and give up yours. That is on the principle that the said adversary will resist your arguments more sturdily than your example; and indeed, on the presumption that if he is generous, you may even fear his overrunning on the other side, since there is nothing provokes retaliation more than concession does. Gently to lay hand in hand is a procedure strongly recommended by Mr. Shirley Brooks, especially in conjugal discussions when differences arise; the tongue being so very proud and sulky, and often refusing to say what the heart desires should be said, whereas the fingers know their duty, and are ready to convey an apologetic pressure



which will stop ninety-nine quarrels out of a hundred, at least where love is. "Specially will a wife do well to accept such a demonstration from her husband as full acknowledgment that he has been wrong and unjust, and begs her pardon ; statements which it is evident that no man with a real sense of his manly dignity could utter under any circumstances whatever." De Montfort, in the tragedy which bears his name, is not so anomalous as might be wished in his highly-pronounced aversion to ever owning himself in the wrong. Some who so offend, observes Jerome, will afterwards such fair confession make as turns e'en the offence into a favour :—

*Manuel.* Yes, some indeed do so ; so will not he :  
He'd rather die than such confession make.

*Jer.* Ay, thou art right ; for now I call to mind  
That once he wrong'd me with unjust suspicion ;  
And when it so fell out that I was proved  
Most guiltless of the fault, I truly thought  
He would have made profession of regret.  
But silent, haughty, and ungraciously  
He bore himself as one offended still."

Gibbon characterizes Valentinian as that "haughty monarch" who was "incapable of the magnanimity which dares to acknowledge a fault." Napoleon's rule was, that in politics you must never retrace your steps : if you have committed a fault, you must never show that you are conscious of it : "error, steadily adhered to, becomes a virtue in the eyes of posterity." Even an arithmetical demonstration that he had been wrong in the estimate he had formed of the length of a march, or the strength of a division, would not avail to alter his tone ; he is said to have reasoned and acted exactly as if his previous calculation had been correct. Danilefsky contrasts his disposition in this respect with the Czar Alexander's, who on one occasion said to Prince Volkonsky, in presence of the King of Prussia and a numer-

ous suite, "I wronged you yesterday, and I publicly ask your pardon." Napoleon, though greatly Alexander's superior in genius, could not, the historian asserts, have done this. His rather was the state of feeling analysed by a Scottish philosopher, under the consciousness of having committed wrong, when the feelings recoil inward, and, by some curious mystery in the nature of our selfishness, instead of prompting atonement, irritate us to repeat and persevere in the injustice. The Jonsonian Cicero is appropriately sententious in his utterance :

"Bad men excuse their faults, good men will leave them.  
He acts the third crime that defends the first."

Dr. Currie admired in Burns the candour and manliness of his avowals of error : "and his avowal was a reparation. His native *fiercé* never forsaking him, the value of a frank acknowledgment was enhanced tenfold from its never being attended with servility." Leigh Hunt warms to Mrs. Inchbald as "a candid confessor of her own faults, not in a pick-thank and deprecating style, but honest and heartfelt (for they hurt her craving for sympathy)." Madam Esmond, as portrayed by the elder of her sons, is a much commoner type of human nature : "I never heard that she repented of her injustice, or acknowledged it," he says, though in after days, the greater gentleness of her behaviour, when they met, may have been intended, he surmises, to imply her tacit admission that she had been wrong ; "but she made no apology, nor did I ask one." Contrast this old lady of fiction with that old lady of fact, the venerable memoir-writer of the Port Royalists, whose biographer testifies to her ready and full acknowledgment of error whenever convicted of it ; and adds, "How often have I seen her, with tears in her eyes, hold out her hand and ask pardon

for a hasty word, or some such trifle," of a servant perhaps, or of others, her inferiors in age, in mind, and in worth.

Robert Spencer, in the *Gordian Knot*, is offered as a warning example of the man who never will admit that he has been to blame, that he has ever done a foolish thing or neglected a wise one. Of Queen Anne, and perhaps of more than one other queen, the story goes, that, walking in one of the royal parks with a maid of honour, she condescended to remark to her companion, "There is a man." "May it please your Majesty," the lady ventured to say, "I think it is a tree." "No; it is a man," was the confident reply; and they walked on till they reached, in fact, the stump of a tree. "I said it was a man," was the queen's satisfied conclusion, in the unshaken conviction that it was impossible she should ever be mistaken. Granting that so complete a victory over fact and common sense, so sublime a reach of self-reliance, is only to be met with in kings and queens whose word has been law from their cradle, yet most of us, it is justly alleged, have had experience of persons nursed by adulation into such a habit of self-confidence that if they once took a stump of a tree for a man they would stand by their mistake to the extent of maintaining it the right thing to have done—persuading themselves that it argued nobler powers, a loftier imagination, a more comprehensive glance, and a finer sense of the picturesque than to take the thing for what it was; that, in fact, the real fault lay with the prosaic nature which saw a stump and nothing more. Archbishop Whately somewhere compares men who will not retract and retrace their steps, to turkeys in a trap: finding himself "in a pen," such a man, rather than "descend" so far as to own a mistake and "walk out" of the error the same way he had walked into

it, will resort to every kind of shuffle; he will insist on it that he was quite right all along, but that there had been a change in the people, or in the circumstances; or perhaps he will flatly deny that he ever said so and so; or maintain that he was misunderstood;—anything rather than retract and acknowledge an error. Nature worketh in us all, says Hooker, a love to our own counsels, and the contradiction of others is a fan to inflame that love. “Our love, set on fire to maintain that which once we have done, sharpeneth the wit to dispute, to argue, and by all means to reason for it.”\* It is Hooker’s genial biographer that says of another of the renowned divines whose “Lives” he has written with such graphic force, that, if the rest of mankind would, like Dr. Sanderson, not conceal their alteration of judgment, but confess it to the honour of God and themselves, then would our nation become freer from pertinacious disputes, and fuller of recantations. Papebroch owned to Mabilion the pain he at first felt in reading the great Benedictine’s refutation of his book, “in a manner so conclusive,” but declared his antagonist’s treatise to have entirely overcome that weakness by its power, beauty, and truth. Malebranche was frank in avowing that he had condemned Jansenius without reading him, for which he now implored the pardon of God and of man. Whatever the merit of Dr. Mead’s medical *Essays*, their author is credited with a noble display of candour in retracting, in a second edition, forty years later, not a few of his former opinions, acknowledging

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\* “O merciful God!” is the beginning of another passage in which the “judicious” Hooker laments weak and wilful man’s reluctance to “show an acknowledgment of error in that which once we have unadvisedly taken upon us to defend.”—Preface to the *Ecclesiastical Polity*, § ii. and § viii.



that "in some facts he had been mistaken, and in some conclusions too precipitate." Locke is honourably eager, in his prefatory epistle to the reader, to avow himself convinced of having been in error on certain metaphysical points—"thinking myself more concerned to quit and renounce any opinion of my own, than oppose that of another, when truth appears against it." He emphasizes therefore his forwardness to resign any opinion he has, and to recede from anything he may have written, on cause being shown. Dryden's biographers do well to admire the frankness with which he acknowledged an error; witness his renunciation of the use of rhyme in plays, once so strenuously defended by him. And to his honour they impute it, that having written all too many lines which, dying, he could wish to blot, he did wish to purge or burn if he could; his own words (written in 1699) are, "which I should be well contented I had time either to purge or to see them fairly burned." Hearne makes memorable among his memoranda of Anthony à Wood, that "no one was more ready to correct his mistakes," and that "he was always well pleased when he was shew'd them." If he had a recognized character while yet alive for this openness and candour, the more hopefully might Clarendon's son and successor appeal to him, as through Dodwell we find his lordship doing, to "own in open court, and get it registered," that he was "sorry for having been made an instrument by the misinformation of others, for aspersing his father's memory. His Lordship's desires herein," adds Mr. Dodwell, "are so very just and becoming him that I do not see how you can as a good Christian refuse compliance." The poor and untaught are noted for finding apologies so impossible to a proud nature, that, rather than say the word, they will encounter any amount of hardship and privation. But of all grudg-



ing, unwilling apologizers, an honest child is held to be the greatest :\* to him to have to say, "I have been to blame ; I am sorry," is the bitterness of humiliation ; for he has learnt no subterfuge, finds no soothing emollient in the way of doing it, but stands in the depths in which his elders only profess to find themselves.

William Spence makes very "honourable mention" indeed of the magnanimous readiness of his reverend collaborateur, William Kirby, to own himself wrong in matters entomological when once convinced of it. "How few men in his position as one of the first of European entomologists . . . would have had their minds open to the conviction of having been in error" in a certain anatomical detail, "and would have had the candour to admit that this error had been pointed out by a mere tiro in the science !" Alexander Wilson, the ornithologist, does not enjoy the same reputation in this respect. His biographer, Mr. Ord, says of him that he was of the *genus irritabile*, and obstinate in opinion ; and that although it ever gave him pleasure to acknowledge error when the conviction resulted from his own judgment alone, he could not endure to be told of mistakes. Hence his associates had to be sparing of their criticisms, for

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\* Such as Molly in Mrs. Gaskell's latest and unfinished, yet most finished, story. She and old Miss Browning go to bed one night chafed and angry with each other ; anon Molly is crying tears of penitence and youthful misery, when there comes a low tap at the door, and there stands the elderly spinster in a wonderful erection of a nightcap, who wants to say, "We've got wrong to-day, somehow, and I think it was perhaps my doing. . . . I rather think I was a little cross. We'll not say any more about it, Molly ; only we'll go to sleep friends. . . ." "I was wrong,—it was my fault," says Molly, kissing her. "Fiddlesticks ! don't contradict me ! I say it was my fault, and I won't hear another word about it."—*Wives and Daughters*, chap. xiii.

fear of forfeiting his friendship. Richard Kirwan, the chemical philosopher, some of whose views were refuted by Lavoisier, is applauded for the candour, "too rarely exhibited," of admitting the erroneousness of what he had taught. It is recognized as one of the oldest maxims of the newspaper world, that no journal should ever admit that it has made a mistake: it may eat its words, or explain them away, or simply leave the whole subject alone; but to say, in black and white, that an error has been committed, is always held inadmissible. Hence when a (not the) leading journal, some years ago, to its credit, and to the credit of English journalism, boldly owned that it had been completely wrong on a critical point of Italian politics, the confession might well make a sensation among observant readers, and be noted as an innovation on the established custom of the daily press. The paper in question gained honourable mention for not holding by the tradition; being wrong, it said it was wrong, and its readers felt that it was quite in keeping with its general character that it should "venture on such imprudent truthfulness." No two things, it has been said, are more opposite than the volunteered and the compulsory apology; as that man of a violent temper felt, who, perpetually precipitated by it into scrapes, after frankly avowing himself in the wrong to the persons he had injured, would add, "The worst of this temper of mine is, that I have to apologize to fools." Lord Macaulay's refusal ever to own himself in the wrong, about William Penn for instance, has often been a theme of comment by even the most appreciative and admiring of his critics. A Saturday Reviewer, for example, held it for undeniable that the members and allies of the Society of Friends were perfectly justified in keeping up a controversy in which the assailant

obstinately refused to acknowledge his defeat. This was in 1859, in a notice of Mr. Paget's *Inquiry* (Blackwood, 1858), in which reference was also made to Mr. Jardine's citation of seventy-two cases of judicial torture which occurred during the time of its alleged discontinuance; yet a subsequent edition of the Bacon essay only contained a concise statement that the author saw no reason to modify his assertion. He felt "quite satisfied," said the same reviewer, or at least the same *Review*, some years later, and this in spite of overwhelming proof of his error, that his "monstrous charges" against William Penn were perfectly true. He would, it is affirmed, have equally felt "quite satisfied" that the "oak groves" under which, in his History, he describes the Fellows of Magdalen as walking, were oak groves, on whatever authority he might have been assured that the trees were remarkably fine elms. If the President and all the Fellows of the College, adds his censor, had come in person to testify that the trees under which they spent their lives were elms, and not oaks, he would only have said that, to judge by that specimen of their knowledge and veracity, they must be "dunces or something worse." \*

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\* The phrase applied by him to Gieseler, in reference to a passage from Lactantius, about which Earl Stanhope had shown his noble friend to be in error.

## XVI.

### WHISPERED-AWAY FRIENDSHIPS.

PROVERBS xvi. 28.

**I**T is the effect, if not the intent and purpose, of the frowardness of the froward, to sow strife, and of the whisperings of the whisperer, to separate chief friends. Purpose is indicated, the full intent of malice aforethought, in that subsequent verse which describes the froward man shutting his eyes to devise froward things ; and "moving his lips he bringeth evil to pass." Moving his lips merely, and hardly that ; a wily whisperer is skilled in the shifts and subterfuges of *sotto voce* suggestions. He shuts his eyes quite while forming his plans, to give himself up entirely to the crafty completion of them. He almost shuts his lips when the plans are ripe for perpetration ; just a murmuring escapes from them, a muttering, a mere moving of the lips ; and even so the mutterer bringeth evil to pass, and even so the whisperer separateth chief friends.

And thus it chanced, says the poet of *Christabel*, "as I divine, with Roland and Sir Leoline.

"Alas ! they had been friends in youth ;  
But whispering tongues can poison truth . . .

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Each spake words of high disdain  
And insult to his heart's best brother ;  
They parted—ne'er to meet again !"

The Latin proverb affirms that *lingua susurronis est peior felle draconis*. That strange lust of mangling reputations, which seizes on hearts the least wantonly cruel, is the marvel of a student in psychology, who remarks, "Let two idle tongues utter a tale against some third

person who never offended the babblers, and how the tale spreads, like fire, lighted none know how, in the herbage of an American prairie : who shall put it out ! ”

“ Ah ! well the Poet said, in sooth,  
That ‘ whispering tongues can poison Truth,’—  
Yes, like a dose of oxalic acid,  
Wrench and convulse poor Peace, the placid,  
And rack dear Love with internal fuel,  
Like arsenic pastry, or, what is as cruel,  
Sugar of lead, that sweetens gruel.”

So at least it was with “ the whisper of tongues in Tringham,” in the *Tale of a Trumpet*, a tale of very tragical mirth :—

“ The Social Clubs dissolved in huffs,  
And the Sons of Harmony came to cuffs,  
While feuds arose, and family quarrels,  
That discomposed the mechanics of morals,  
For screws were loose between brother and brother,  
While sisters fastened their nails on each other ;  
Such wrangles, and jangles, and miff, and tiff,  
And spar, and jar, and breezes as stiff  
As ever upset a friendship or skiff !  
The plighted Lovers, who used to walk,  
Refused to meet, and declined to talk ;  
And wish’d for *two* moons to reflect the sun,  
That they mightn’t look together on one ;  
While wedded affection ran so low,  
That the eldest John Anderson snubbed his Jo—  
And instead of the toddle adown the hill,  
Hand in hand,  
As the song has plann’d,  
Scratch’d her, penniless, out of his will ! ”

One of Dr. Thomas Brown’s ethical lectures concerns the peculiar people who “ rejoice in suggesting thoughts that may poison the confidence of friends,” and who, as he describes them, are faithful in conveying to every one the whispers of unmerited scandal, of which, otherwise, the listener in question would never have heard, as he never could have suspected them. There



is no class of people held to be more universally and more justly reprobated and disliked than those who fetch and carry the scandal which they have not even the wit to invent: bred in low levels of society, they are likened to an epidemical malaria, infecting the atmosphere in which they live with their pestilential influences. Nor is it accepted as a real extenuation of the mischief they work, that the poison they spread is not of their own manufacture. A great deal more of the harm done by calumny is declared to be due to the recklessness of wanton gossip than to deliberate and malicious detraction. Wisely wary is the Frontin of Gresset (in *Le Méchant*):—

“Les rapports font toujours plus de mal que de bien ;  
Et de tout le passé je ne sais jamais rien.”

The two great classes of promoters of social happiness, according to Sir Arthur Helps, are cheerful people, and people who have some reticence; and the latter he accounts to be more secure benefits to society than even the former: they are non-conductors of all the heats and animosities around them. To have peace in a house, or a family, he says, or in any social circle, the members of it must beware of passing on hasty and uncharitable speeches; for such a passing on, the whole of the context seldom being told, is often not conveying but creating mischief.

Look into great families, says Dr. South, and you shall find some one paltry talebearer who, by carrying stories from one to another, shall inflame the minds and discompose the quiet of all concerned: from families pass to towns or cities, and “two or three pragmatical, intriguing, meddling fellows (men of business some call them) by the venom of their false tongues shall set the whole neighbourhood together by the ears.” The *blackie's* whisper in the old ballad of Jamie Douglas

breeds woe for those whispered about, and brings a malediction on the whisperer :—

“An’ wae betide ye, black Fastnèss !  
Ay, and an ill deid may ye die ;  
Ye was the first and foremost man  
Wha parted my true lord and me.”

The Mrs. Clackitt of the *School for Scandal* is commended by Lady Sneerwell as having, truly, a very pretty talent for talebearing, and a great deal of industry in whispering away a good character or an old friendship ; and Snake owns her to have been pretty successful in her day ; for to his knowledge she has been the cause of six matches being broken off, and three sons being disinherited ; of four forced elopements, and as many close confinements ; of nine separate maintenances, and two divorces. If Joseph Surface is ready with his sententious protest, “The licence of invention some people take is monstrous indeed,” and Maria, with her more sincere one, “’Tis so ; but, in my opinion, those who report such things are equally culpable,”—so is Mrs. Candour with her characteristic “To be sure they are : tale-bearers are as bad as the tale-makers—’tis an old observation, and a very true one ; but what’s to be done ? how will you prevent people from talking ?”—above all, such people as Mrs. Candour herself, who is too candid to do ill by stealth, and too open to affect whispering. One can give her credit for a certain constitutional contempt for mere whisperers as a feeble folk, —and for almost a good-humoured though not too good-natured enjoyment of the sarcastic things we find in print about people given to whispering, whatever the matter (harmful or harmless) conveyed in that objectionable mode. Let us glance at some of these sundry takings-off, in the act and manner.

Pope’s couplet is a noteworthy one about Fannius,—

“ — impudently near,  
When half his nose is in his Prince's ear.”

This is a more telling attitude, a more tell-tale or tale-telling one, than that indicated by Cowper, whose emphatic speaker dearly loves to oppose, in contact inconvenient, nose to nose, as if the gnomon on his neighbour's phiz, touched with the magnet, had attracted his; and whose

“ — whisper'd theme, dilated and at large,  
Proves after all a wind-gun's airy charge.”

Molière pictures in Timante a pretentious, platitudin-ary whisperer of this sort; a busy-body, who yet, like Chaucer's lawyer, seems busier than he is, and of whose business nobody is the better:—

“ Sans cesse il a tout bas, pour rompre l'entretien,  
Un secret à vous dire, et ce secret n'est rien;  
De la moindre vétille il fait une merveille,  
Et, jusques au bonjour, il dit tout à l'oreille.”

Characteristic it is, at one end of the scale of society, of Lewis the Eleventh, as described by Philippe de Comines, that he *aimait à parler en l'oreille*. So is it, at the other end, of such a typical personage as Earnshaw, in the *Gordian Knot*, that, being an uncomfortable sort of man, he cannot say a thing and have done with it, but whispers, and noses his neighbour's ear,—as in the scene with Harris, whom he would keep addressing “in a low whisper. Harris tried to keep him off by huge puffs of tobacco smoke, but there was no getting him to sit up and speak out.” Swift was plainspoken enough in characterizing and apostrophizing one of this complexion, with, says he,

“ Thy formal nods, important sneers,  
Thy whisperings foisted in all ears,  
Which are, whatever you may think,  
But nonsense wrapped up in a stink.”

Nothing but the revolution of an umbrella can keep some folks from mouthing a neighbour's ear. Master Oliver Proudpute is distinguished in Scott for the zeal with which he, "busy bonnet-maker," whispers unimportant but fussy communications into sundry ears. A modern literary man about town is graphic anent the peculiar occupants of the benches of the Royal Exchange piazza — lank, mystic-looking men, mostly advanced in years, and shiny in threadbare black cloth, who converse with one another in furtive whispers, the cavernous mouth screened by the rugose hand, with its knotted cordage of veins and its chalkstoned knuckles, as though the whisper were of such commercial moment that the whisperer feared its instantaneous transport to the ears of Rothschild or Baring, and the consequent uprising or downfalling of stocks or corn, silk or tallow. In one of his extant letters to Cicero, M. Cœlius adverts to the many ugly reports current about Cæsar, "but propagated only in whispers," — not yet publicly talked of, "but among the few, whom you know, told openly by way of secrets; Domitius never mentions them without clapping his hand to his mouth." The Fungus of *Salmagundi* is one of those fidgeting, meddling quidnuncs, one of your "Q in the corner" fellows, who speak volumes with a wink, and convey most portentous information by mumbling at your ear. Highly undesirable acquaintance in the streets of London are those "duffers" who accost their intended dupes while walking by their side, and usually speak in a half-whisper, as they keep pace with them, and look mysteriously and misgivingly around as if for a Custom-house officer within earshot, while they moot the delicate question of bandanas or cigars. When Captain Brazen, in Farquhar's comedy, approaches Worthy with a confidential "Harkye, my dear!" the other rebuffs his



stealthy mode of advance with the reminder, "Whispering, sir, before company is not manners; and when nobody's by, 'tis foolish." One of Moore's satires, dated while prelates yet wore wigs, takes off a certain

"—— baronet of many words,  
Who loves so, in the House of Lords,  
To whisper Bishops—and so nigh  
Unto their wigs in whispering goes,  
That you may always know him by  
A patch of powder on his nose."

The subject of such *subaudita* may often be inoffensive enough, but there is offence (nay but there *is*, Horatio) in the mode of communication. If the whisper, however, be malicious, how great is that malice—the greater for the littleness of the conveyance. If the whisperer be malignant, how base is that malignity—the baser for the meanness of his 'bated breath. In denying good-nature to Mrs. Candour, this much of qualification should be understood, that there is no denying it to her in the sense of those double d'd "good-natured friends." Sir Fretful Plagiary is so unthankful for, and through whom he is sure to hear of the abuse heaped on him by his ill-natured foes. Jack Hobbleday, of Little Pedlington, is a counterpart of Mrs. Candour: having got hold of a book of reckless personalities, he is indefatigable in circulating it where it may give most pain and breed most animosities: "People *are* fools to notice such things," quoth he: "I have shown the book to, at least, twenty of my most intimate friends, pointed out to them the most disagreeable things said about themselves. But I'm for peace and quietness—recommended them to take no notice of it—never to think of going to law about it. But there they are, all of them, going at it, ding-dong." In the very book in question Jack Hobbleday himself is designated, heterographically,



“the best natured little fellar in Little Pedlington, but somehow sets more people by the years than all the ill-natured fellars together. Would set the greatest friends in all ainshunt history a-quareling—Damon and Pickaxe, Restus and Pillydus,” etc., etc., etc. The “friends” of Cadurcis in Mr. Disraeli’s *Venetia*, having got hold of what is too good a story about him, or against him, to be coughed down, or frowned down, or hushed up, or talked out, circulate the authentic tale with the most considerate assiduity, and are all anxiety to ensure its arriving at the proper address. Mr. Folair, the provincial actor, takes prodigious pains to keep Nicholas Nickleby *au courant*, or well posted up, in all the abuse that is afloat against him behind his back. Lenville says this, and says that, and very damaging his sayings are: “I mention it as the friend of both parties, and in strict confidence. I don’t agree with him, you know.” It is a low-life latter-day reproduction of Scott’s Sir Mungo Malagrowth, who, having heard bad news of and for young Nigel in the Tower, is for instantly starting to visit the “poor lad,” and bestow some comfort on him. “The lad will want a pleasant companion, who can tell him the nature of the punishment which he is to suffer, and other matters of concernment. I will not leave him until I show him how absolutely he hath ruined himself from feather to spur, how deplorable is his present state, and how small is his chance of mending it.” Save me from my friends, may well be a deprecation in request; especially from the “good-natured” sort.

Mrs. Piozzi mentions in her correspondence a breakfast-party at Samuel Lysons’, when he oddly pointed to some shelf in his chambers, crying, “There, there they are; I gathered up every paper, every nonsense that was written against you [Mrs. Thrale] at the time of your marriage [to Piozzi]; everything to ridicule either

of you that could be found; and there they are." "Thank you," said the lady, and the conversation changed. It was on their way home that John Kemble, one of the party, remarked that Lysons made it his business to come and tell him every disagreeable thing he could think on concerning himself; every ballad, every satirical criticism he could hear of. When Frederick the Great told some protesting Prussians who remonstrated against his patronage of Voltaire, that he only meant to use the brilliant Frenchman as one sucks an orange, and then throw him aside, a good-natured friend was not wanting to repeat the happy phrase to the unhappy person concerned: "*La Metrie ne manqua pas de me rendre ce bel apophthègme digne de Denis de Syracuse.*"\* When indeed was ever a fetcher and carrier of such edged tools of speech, a snapper-up of such unconsidered trifles of malice, *manquant*? Doctor Primrose, sometime vicar of Wakefield, has this family experience to record: "Scandalous whispers began to circulate at our expense, and our tranquillity was continually disturbed by persons who came as friends to tell us what was said of us by enemies." The autobiographer of a Strange Story renounces off-hand the future friendship of one such professing friend. Mr. Spectator, with all his placidity, is fain to own that he "could never bear one of those officious friends that would be telling every malicious report, every idle censure, that passed upon me." Again and again in Byron's letters we come upon

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\* On the other hand, when Frederick sent a large supply of his verses to Voltaire with a request to have them returned, with remarks and corrections, the *aside* of the French wit, "See what a quantity of his dirty linen the king has sent me to wash!" was duly conveyed by talebearers to the royal ear, and Frederick was as much incensed as, to borrow Macaulay's simile, a Grub Street writer who had found his name in the Dunciad.

such a passage as, "A 'Good-natured Friend' tells me there is a most scurrilous attack on us [coupling his publisher Mr. Murray with himself] in the *Anti-jacobin Review*;" or as this, in a postscript to Moore: "I never heard the 'report' you mention, nor, I dare say, many others. But, in course, you, as well as others, have—'good-natured friends' who do their duty in the usual way." Landor, in his Tuscan retreat, professedly never looked for nor saw the literary strictures of his foes: the whole world might write against him, and leave him ignorant of it to the day of his death. "A friend who announces to me such things, has performed the last act of his friendship." It was no more pardonable, in Walter Savage Landor's opinion, freely and figuratively expressed, with a local aptitude of illustration, than to lift up the gnat-net over his bed, on pretext of showing him there were gnats in the room. "If I owed a man a grudge, I would get him to write against me; but if anybody owed me one, he would come and tell me of it." Cicero bids "the gods confound that Segulius, the greatest knave that is, or was, or ever will be," for fetching and carrying, and mischief-making in news-bearing, between him and his friends. The Autocrat of the Breakfast-table enjoins us not to flatter ourselves that friendship authorizes us to say disagreeable things to our intimates; on the contrary, the nearer we come into relation with a person, the more necessary do tact and courtesy become. "Except in cases of necessity, which are rare, leave your friend to learn unpleasant truths from his enemies; they are ready enough to tell them." A man that is a friend must show himself friendly, but not in that sort of way.

It is pleasant to find a man one might have suspected of being, in his own despite, a little, or more than a little,

hardened by a long course of selfish indulgence, as Lord March, writing to "my dear George" Selwyn, to hope he does not think that anybody, or anything, can make a *tracasserie* between them two. "I must be the poorest creature upon earth . . . if any one alive can make any impression upon me when you are concerned," let gossips and talebearers tell or do their worst. Mr. Hayward claims credit for his lordship's soundness of both head and heart in this respect and on this account; and he suggests how large an amount of unhappiness might be prevented by the universal adoption of the principle—never to listen to, much less believe, the alleged unkindness of a friend. All of us, as he remarks, have our dissatisfied, complaining, uncongenial moments, when we may neglect ordinary attentions, or let drop words utterly at variance with the habitual suggestions of our hearts. These, he adds, are repeated from design or carelessness: then come complaints and explanations; confidence is destroyed; "the credulous hope of mutual minds is over;" and thus ends at once the solace of a life.

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The charming woman of the social essayist is ironically the gentlest of her sex, and would not do a cruel thing nor say an unkind word for the world: when she tells you the unpleasant things which ill-natured people have said of your friends or hers, she tells them in the sweetest and dearest way imaginable: she is so sure there is not a syllable of truth in it all; and what a shame it is that people should be so ill-natured! "In the gentle tone of sympathy and deprecation peculiar to her, she gives you all the ugly and uncomfortable reports that have come to her, of which you have never heard a breath until this moment; yet it is you who are stupid, for she tells them to you as if they were of patent notoriety to the

whole world ; only she does not believe them, remember ! ” Considering the scrupulous care she takes to deny and defend as she retails, you cannot class her with the tribe of the ill-natured whom she censures : yet you wish she had not told you : the excuse dies away from your memory, but the ill-savoured report roots, and you feel that you have lost your respect for your former friends for ever. Downright ill-nature is affirmed to be a rarer quality than some persons suppose ; and half the detraction of society is done unconsciously and by good-natured pleasant people.

Let none hope to win the love of Schiller’s Don Cæsar, that with malicious tales encroach upon a brother’s ear, and point—

“ With busy zeal of false officious friendship,  
The dart of some rash angry word, escaped  
From passion’s heat :—it wounds not from the lips,  
But swallowed by suspicion’s greedy ear,  
Like a rank poisonous weed, embittered creeps,  
And hangs about the heart with thousand shoots,  
Perplexing Nature’s ties.”

And in that way the talebearing whisperer separateth chief friends ; sets brother against brother, and shakes off, as no one else can, the friend that sticketh closer than a brother.



## XVII.

### *FAIR-WEATHER FRIENDS.*

PROVERBS xvii. 17 ; xix. 7.

IF one swallow makes not summer, so neither do summer friends by the score make one friend for life. A summer friend is for summer wear. Who shall warrant him winter-proof? There is more by a great deal of summer than of friendship in his make-up. Summer friends come like swallows, so depart. Fair weather brings them ; come foul, and they are gone. He that sang in the Forest of Arden "Blow, blow, thou winter wind," called the boreal blast he invoked "not so unkind as man's ingratitude;" and declared most friendship to be feigning ; and sang again, "Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky," "Thy sting is not so sharp as friend remembered not." So collapses many a Midsummer Night's Dream of present friendship into a bleak Winter's Tale of friendship fled. Now, a friend, in the authentic sense, as wise men understand it, and as the Wise King defines it, "A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." At all times, bad as well as good, for worse as well as for better. In all seasons ; autumn's darkening decline as well as spring's joyous outburst,—winter's chill darkness that may be felt, not less than summer's prodigality of sunshine. But the Wise King knew as well in his day the tricks and lapses and *laches* of summer friends, as any deluded and forsaken victim can know, in this our late day, upon whom the end of the nineteenth century is coming, almost come ; and so true is poor human nature to itself that it was as indisputable a fact in the days of Solomon as it is in our own, that "all the brethren of the

poor do hate him ; how much more do his friends go far from him ! he pursueth them with words, yet they are wanting to him." Poverty parts good company. And then is seen and laid to heart as never before, that a friend in winter time is a friend for all time ; that a friend in need is a friend indeed.

It is a theme Ovid harps upon. So long as things go well with you, says he, many are the friends you may reckon, if not reckon upon ; but let clouds gather, and anon you are left to yourself.

"Donec eris felix multos numerabis amicos ;  
Tempora si fuerint nubila, solus eris."

Elsewhere again ; no one, he says, is beloved but the man whom Fortune favours ; the first faint clap of her thunder startles into flight the whole pack of summer friends, who verily stay not on the order of their going, but go at once.

"Diligitur nemo nisi cui Fortuna secunda est,  
Quæ, simul intonuit, proxima quæque fugat."

And in another place the same poet, who had seen life, and life in high places too, sententiously moralizes on the care taken by ants never to waste time and trouble in wending their way to an empty granary ; just so, no friend, of the fair-weather sort, will stultify himself by visiting those who have come to the end of their wealth.

"Horrea formicæ tendunt ad inania nunquam ;  
Nullus ad amissas ibit amicus opes."

Prosperity hath many friends, says the adage : *Felicitas multos habet amicos*. But the complexion of their friendship is that of the "mahogany"—table friends they are, who will be off when Timon's board is empty and himself undone. *Est amicus socius mensæ, et non permanebit in die necessitatis*. Seneca can get but a distant view of the friends of the unfortunate, so

cautious are they not to come too near: *Viri infelices procul amici*. Plautus computes the tenacity of such friendship by the scale of a man's means; let him be reduced, and his hangers-on fall off. "Ut cuique homini res parata est, firmi amici sunt; si res lassa labat Itidem amici collabuscunt." The lapse of wealth is the collapse of that social circle. So Theognis, in a passage familiar in analecta books: If you are wealthy, says that poet, you will have friends in plenty; but be you poor, and they will be few, and you will have forfeited your reputation as a good fellow.

Εἰ μὲν γὰρ πλουτῆς πολλοὶ φίλοι, ἦν δὲ πένηαι  
 Παῦροι, κ' οὐκεθ' ὁμῶς αὐτὸς ἀνὴρ ἀγαθός.

Let the pot boil, and friendship will keep hot the while: *Zeî χύτρα, ζῆ φιλία: Fervet olla, vivit amicitia*. Horace, for the boiling pot, has the well-filled cask; empty that, and there is a flight of friends in all directions: *Diffugiunt, cadis Cum fæce siccatis, amici Ferre jugum pariter dolosi*. They will, some of them, stay on for the draining of the dregs; but not a second later. When we are happy, in the spring-tide of abundance, and the rising flood of plenty, as Feltham words it, the world will be our servant; then all men flock about us, with bare heads, and bended bodies, and protesting tongues. But when these pleasant waters "fall to ebbing; when wealth but shifts to another hand; these men look upon us at a distance, and stiffen themselves as if they were in armour; lest, if they should come nigh us, they should get a wound in the close." There is what the author of *Middlemarch* calls a cold air surrounding those who are down in the world, and people are glad to get away from them, as from a cold room: human beings, mere men and women, without furniture, without anything to offer you, who have ceased to count as anybody, "present an embarrassing negation of

reasons for wishing to see them, or of subjects on which to converse with them." Noureddin's eaves-dropper-friend who overhears the steward's dismal report to his master of failing means, loses no time in repeating it to the company, and *they* lose none in giving Noureddin the cold shoulder. Another of the Arabian Nights' tales is pointed at, or points, the same moral; the prodigal hospitality of Abon Hassan is suddenly checked by want of funds; and then we read, that "as soon as he left off keeping his table his friends forsook him: whenever they saw him they avoided him, and if by chance he met any of them, and went to stop them, they always excused themselves on some pretence or other." A Social Essayist is satirical upon the once popular picturesque illustration in story-books of some easy, careless, amiable spendthrift, who, after lavishing his fortune upon so-called friends, was, in the evil hour, deserted by them. Now, friends, it is objected, are not the sort of people men do lavish fortunes upon: the spendthrift wished to make a figure or enjoy himself, and collected about him whoever would further this end; but it was really the fault of the spender, not of the world, that he should drop through after his money was gone. "The assumption was preposterous that, after his own means were wasted, his acquaintance should make all straight by giving him theirs—which was the moral apparently pressed on our raw and perplexed judgment." What! shall we not resort to our friends in time of need? is a query of exclamation put by Bishop Latimer in one of his sermons; and he answers it by another: "And trow ye we shall not find them asleep?\*" Yes, I warrant you; and when we need their help most, we shall not have

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\* In reference to Gethsemane.

it." Friendship in ill-luck turns to mere acquaintance: the wine of life, as a modern moralist puts it, goes into vinegar; and folks that hugged the bottle shirk the cruet.

“ ——— Τοὺς φίλους

Ἐν τοῖς κακοῖς χρεὶ τοῖς φίλοισιν ὠφελεῖν.

Ὅταν δ' ὁ δαίμων εὖ διδῷ, τί χρεὶ φίλων;

\* \* \* \* \*

Ὅνομα γὰρ, ἔργον δ' οὐκ ἔχουσιν οἱ φίλοι

Οἱ μὴ 'πὶ ταῖσι συμφοραῖς ὄντες φίλοι.\*

Chaucer's version of the *Romaunt of the Rose* is but a vigorous variation of the old-world theme: the professions of fair-weather friends are all falsehood and guile, his warning runs, to the credulous and deluded,—

“As they shal aftirward se,  
Whanne they arn falle in poverte,  
And ben of good and catelle bare;  
Thanne shulde they sene who freendis ware.  
For of an hundred certeynly,  
Nor of a thousand fulle scarsly,  
Ne shal they fynde unnethis oon,  
Whanne poverte is comen upon.”

Bolingbroke in mature age described himself as having been apt in early life† to confound his acquaintance and his friends together,—never doubting that he had a numerous cohort of the latter. He expected, if ever he should fall into misfortune, to have as many and as remarkable instances of friendship to produce as the Scythian in one of Lucian's dialogues draws from his nation. Into these misfortunes he had fallen. And with this recorded result: “The fire of my adversity has purged the mass of my acquaintance; and, the separa-

\* Euripid. *Orestes*, 454, 455, 664 666.

† “At that age of life when there is balm in the blood, and that confidence in the mind which the innocency of our own heart inspires, and the experience of other men's destroys.”—Bolingbroke to Swift, March 17, 1719.



tion made, I discover on one side a handful of friends, but on the other a legion of enemies, at least of strangers." Some three or four years later that noble lord harps on the same string, and moralizes at his best on the effect of many misfortunes in making a nice discrimination between his acquaintance and his friends, such as we have seldom sagacity enough to make for ourselves: those insects of various hues, which used to hum and buzz about him while he stood in the sunshine, had disappeared since he had lived in the shade. Gay's fable addressed "To a Modern Politician" might reach the address of more than one or two of that time, if not of all times:

"Stripped of your treasures, power, and place, . . .  
 Where are your slaves, your flattering host?  
 What tongues now feed you with applause?  
 Where are the champions of your cause?  
 Now e'en that very fawning train  
 Which shared the gleanings of your gain,  
 Press foremost who shall first accuse  
 Your selfish jobs, your narrow views," etc.

What friends were made? A hireling herd, for temporary votes preferred. Men shut their doors against a setting sun, is a pregnant saying of the cynic Ape-mantus. "I should fear those that dance before me now," as in the halls of Timon of Athens, "would one day stamp upon me." As pregnant is the saying of the Fool in *King Lear*: Let go thy hold when a great wheel runs down a hill, lest it break thy neck with following it; but the great one that goes up the hill, let him draw thee after. "Sir, sir," quoth bluff Enobarbus to fallen or falling Antony, "Thou'rt so leaky, that we must leave thee to thy sinking, for thy dearest quit thee." It is by no means strange, in the philosophy of the Player King in *Hamlet*, that our loves should with our fortunes change,

“For 'tis a question left us yet to prove,  
Whether love lead fortune, or else fortune love.  
The great man down, you mark, his favourite flies ;  
The poor advanced makes friends of enemies.  
And hitherto doth love on fortune tend ;  
For who not needs, shall never lack a friend ;  
And who in want a hollow friend doth try,  
Directly seasons him his enemy.”

The fifth act of Jonson's tragedy of *Sejanus* is throughout in keeping with the exclamation of Arruntius, when the Emperor's letter is being read, and the senators are shifting their seats further and further off, “Gods! how the leaves drop off, this little wind!” Has the falling man no friends here? All is hushed. “Where now are all the hails and exclamations?—

“He that this morn rose proudly, as the sun,  
And, breaking through a mist of clients' breath,  
Came on, as gazed at and admired as he,  
When superstitious Moors salute his light,  
. . . This man to fall! fall? ay, without a look  
That durst appear his friend, or lend so much  
Of vain relief, to his changed state, as pity!”

They that, before, like gnats, played in his beams, and thronged to circumscribe him, now not seen, nor deign to hold a common seat with him. *Le monde*, says a French naturalist, *aime à rabaisser et à dénigrer tout ce qui a brille*. Prescott tells how in the hour of Almagro's fallen fortunes, enemies started up, “like the base reptiles crawling into light amidst the ruins of some noble edifice,”—some of them men who had been “grateful” recipients of his bounty—in the sense of gratitude for favours to come. The Kaiser Henry IV. forms an impressive picture as we see him crossing the Alps with his faithful Bertha and their infant child, but without one among the courtiers who had so lately thronged his palace, to be the companion of his toil and dangers. The historian of the Italian Republics tells us of Lo-

renzo de' Medici, when his situation became critical, in 1479, that "the people, whose attachment was founded on his prodigality and his public entertainments, showed, when his prosperity declined, that they were ready to abandon him." When Columbus in Hispaniola was looked upon as a declining man (1495), and Aguado hailed as the lord of the ascendant, "every dastard spirit" hastened to asperse the former, and thereby curry favour with the latter; worship the rising sun, and shut his door against the setting one. So was it with the veteran admiral at court, two years later. Looked upon as a man declining in popularity, Columbus was by the baser sort treated with slight and supercilious scorn. In 1500, again, when he and his brothers were shipped home in chains, every base spirit which had been awed into obsequiousness by them while in power, now started up to insult and slander them. "Horns were blown in the neighbourhood of their prison [in San Domingo], to taunt them with the exultings of the rabble." The fate of the governor, Bobadilla, when ousted from his post in 1502, supplies the biographer of Columbus with a reflection to the purpose; the emptiness of mere official rank, when unsustained by merit, was signally manifest in his case: the moment his authority in the island was at an end, his importance vanished; and he found himself a solitary and neglected man, deserted by those whom he had most favoured. It is the way of the world. Charles Wesley's experiences in the same latitude afford a homely illustration of it. His journal, written in America at the time of his misunderstanding with Mr. Oglethorpe, records his sense of being "abused and slighted into an opinion of" his own "inconsiderableness. I could not," he goes on to say, "more be trampled upon were I a fallen minister of state. The people have found out

that I am in disgrace; my few well-wishers are afraid to speak to me: some have turned out of the way to avoid me; others have desired that I would not take it ill if they seemed not to know me when we should meet. The servant that used to wash my linen, sent it back unwashed." *Mos est oblivisci hominibus, neque novisse, cujus nihili sit faciunda gratia*, says Plautus; and that is a fashion, *mos*, that is never out of fashion. When old Madame de Bernstein ceased to patronize Harry Warrington, and took no pains to hide her change of countenance, her servants, Mr. Thackeray makes a point of mentioning, "who used to treat him with such eager respect, scarcely paid him now any attention. My lady was often indisposed or engaged when he called upon her; her people did not press him to wait; did not volunteer to ask him whether he would stay and dine, as they used in the days when he was the Fortunate Youth and companion of the wealthy and great." As a matter of course, the Macaronis and fine gentlemen at White's and Arthur's showed poor Harry Warrington such a very cold shoulder, that he sought *their* society less and less. Ovid will help us to yet another quotation on a theme so familiar to his pen:

"Vix duo tresve mihi de tot superestis, amici.  
Cætera Fortunæ, non mea turba, fuit."

The man in power, it has been said, is never alone. But let him tumble from his place; and then, "*le soir même de sa disgrâce, subitement, rudement, avec brutalité, le vide se fait autour de lui.*" As Isolani with Wallenstein: the good ship in which his hopes were stowed, once among the breakers, he hurries to preserve his wares; "as light—

"As the free bird from the hospitable twig  
Where it had rested, he flies off from me."

That is an ominous entry in Swift's Journal to Stella,



bearing date Dec. 30, 1711: "The Duke of Marlborough was at court to-day, and nobody hardly took notice of him." The Mashams were coming in, and the Marlboroughs were going out. The greatest genius among Swift's friends and contemporaries, and more than even *his* equal in satire, propounds as a safe doctrine for satirists at large, that

"—— if satire knows its time and place,  
You still may lash the greatest—in disgrace :  
For merit will by turns forsake them all ;  
Would you know when ? exactly when they fall."

Says a Person of Quality in one of Mr. Browning's plays,—

"Do I not know, if courtiers prove remiss,  
There is a cause ? Of last year's fervid throng  
Scarce one-half comes now !

*Sab.* [Aside.] One-half ? No, alas !

*The D.* So can the mere suspicion of a cloud  
Over my fortunes strike each loyal heart."

Amusing as edifying is the story M. Villemain tells, in his *Memoir of Chateaubriand*,\* of Daru's interview with the Emperor while the draft of the new Academician's speech was under consideration. Napoleon, speaking loudly and angrily, apostrophized the absent author of the inaugural speech in a tone of menace and indignation,—“If you don't like France, sir, you may leave it. Go, sir ; we don't understand each other, and I am master here.” Now the words thus addressed, in Daru's sole presence—to the obnoxious absentee, were well heard outside the presence-chamber by courtly waiters upon providence, the providence of his Imperial Majesty ; and naturally they were by them assumed to concern, not Chateaubriand, but Daru. So, when the Minister returned to the ante-chamber, he found that his

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\* *La Tribune Moderne*, 1<sup>ère</sup> partie.



courtly friends stood aloof,\* or seemed to have forgotten his existence. At last some courageous bystander, it seems, "ventured to hint that the sentence of banishment had been overheard, and it was unnecessary to explain that friendship could maintain no contest against loyalty. Daru, bursting into a laugh, reported the true meaning of the scene;" and there is perhaps nothing unreasonable in the surmise that the assembled courtiers joined in the merriment without a suspicion of their abject degradation. A day came when the Emperor himself was to taste the bitterness of forsaken because fallen power. Caulaincourt describes the deserted galleries and saloons at Fontainebleau in April 1814: the marshals had vanished, the brilliant staff of each marshal had vanished with him, and the glittering crowd had dispersed; there was, instead, a solitude that chilled the heart; "the redoubtable chief who so lately had never moved except surrounded by a magnificent cortége," was now disinherited of the care and interest even of his friends. No sooner was Kutusoff out of favour at court, than the courtiers, "observant of the least cloud which overshadows the fortunes of a leading character," shunned his society,—and this in so marked a way that "the future saviour of Russia" received with tears of gratitude the visit of Count Oginski, a Polish nobleman, who, having formerly been intimate with him in Lithuania, was now leal and large-hearted enough to continue his friend in adversity. A cynical Turkish maxim gives

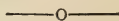
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\* To compare small folks with great, there are the subalterns in Miss Lee's *Cavendish*, upon whom the scolding speech of the commanding officer to one of his juniors is decisive in its damaging effect as regards the latter. "All who hoped, all who feared, all who, without opinion or judgment of their own, follow that of the majority, gradually shrunk from the intimacy of a young man who, whatever his merit, was guilty of the crime of not pleasing."—*Cavendish Tales: Cavendish*.

counsel to "caress the favourites, avoid the unfortunate, and trust nobody." The not uncommon sight, in India, of a cloud of crows pecking a sick vulture to death, is taken by Macaulay as no bad type of what happens in this country, as often as fortune deserts one who has been great and dreaded: in an instant, all the sycophants who had lately been ready to lie for him, to forge for him, to pander for him, to poison for him, hasten to purchase the favour of his victorious enemies by accusing him. Massinger's Sir Giles Overreach is unblushingly a professor of the like practical philosophy; thus he expounds it to Wellborn:—

"We worldly men, when we see friends and kinsmen  
Past hope, sunk in their fortunes, lend no hand  
To lift them up, but rather set our feet  
Upon their heads, to press them to the bottom."

The diction may recall Ovid's fine comparison of a man of broken fortunes to a falling column, which, the lower it sinks, the greater weight it is obliged to sustain.



## XVIII.

### IMPOSING SILENCE AND INCONTINENT CHATTER.

PROVERBS xvii. 28.\*

**I**MPOSING in more senses than one is the cautious silence of the simpleton. It is an imposition upon the company, and he is an impostor, in so far as the company give him credit for reticent wisdom. For "even a fool when he holdeth his peace is counted wise; and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understand-

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\* In the First Series of *Secular Annotations on Scripture Texts*, pp. 70-76, under the title of "The Discreet Silence of Folly," may be found a previous chapter of instances and illustrations of this text.

ing." With exposition of speech, the imposition would end. Exposing himself, he would no longer impose upon them. But, while sagely silent, he is accounted a silent sage. Shrewd enough to hold his tongue, his politic taciturnity is imposing; and wisdom is imputed to him, and happy man is his dole.

Ass though he be, he is in this one regard *not* "like to horse and mule, which have no understanding, whose mouths must be held with bit and bridle." At least he has just understanding enough to put on a curb for himself, to apply his own bit to his own mouth, and to keep it there, and find himself the better for the gag.

It has been safely enough alleged that, of two men equally successful in the business of life, the man who is silent will be generally deemed to have more in him than the man who talks: the latter "shows his hand;" everybody can tell the exact length of his tether; he has trotted himself out so often that all his points and pieces are matters of notoriety. But of the taciturn man little or nothing is known. *Omne ignotum pro magnifico*. "The shallow murmur, but the deep are dumb." Friends and acquaintance shake their heads knowingly, and exclaim with an air of authority that "so and so" has a great deal more in him than people imagine. "They are as often wrong as right; but what need that signify to the silent man? He can sustain his reputation as long as he likes, by the simple process of holding his tongue." The more a man, desirous to pass at a value above his worth, can, as the Caxtonian essayist puts it, contrast by dignified silence the garrulity of trivial minds, the more the world will give him credit for the wealth which he does not possess. To follow out one of the Essayist's illustrations,—when we see a dumb strong-box with its lid braced down

by iron clasps, and secured by a jealous padlock, involuntarily we suppose that its contents must be infinitely more precious than the gauds and nicknacks which are unguardedly scattered about a lady's drawing-room. "Who could believe that a box so rigidly locked had nothing in it but odds and ends, which would be just as safe in a bandbox?" A dissertator on Humbugs admits into the category the man who is cunning enough to get himself rated above his real deserts, but whose attitude, so far from being aggressive or insidious, is one of pure self-defence—the man who, conscious of possessing not a tithe of the ability with which he is credited, passes his life in the constant endeavour to maintain the imposture—who, having a secret to keep, by the instinct of self-preservation keeps it, that secret being his own emptiness; that once oozing out, he is lost. There is a reputed wiseacre in one of Balzac's tales, who, whenever conversation turned on matters of science or history, made a point of becoming judiciously reticent and imposingly grave, and confined his part in the performance to little affirmative nods or negative movements of the head, *comme un homme profond*, and so saved his character. Tact and experience and knowledge of the world may go far in aid of intellectual deficiencies, and even turn out sometimes "a very respectable counterfeit of a clever man;" if they cannot supply brains, they can and often do prevent the lack of them appearing; if they cannot make a fool wise, they will keep him from a thousand foolish words and actions. An intelligent simper may significantly tell of caution and an habitual abstinence from making foolish remarks, and thus indicates "a fertility of resource in concealing ignorance." The blockhead also, who is ambitious, and who has no talent, finds sometimes, quoth Mr. Carlyle, in the "talent of silence"



a kind succedaneum. Sir Loftus Prettyman in the play, assuring Harwood that men of fashion are sparing of their words, for various reasons, one being that inferior people are apt to forget themselves, and despise what is too familiar, is answered, "Don't take so much pains to make me comprehend that the more fools speak the more people will despise them ; I never had a clearer conviction of it in my life." To Jaques' maxim, "'Tis good to be sad, and say nothing," Rosalind replies, "Why, then, 'tis good to be a post." Even a post could almost be got to say *Hum*, like the mendicant friar who, his quality as yet unknown, thereby passed for wise with Molière and Chapelle, when the two wits were disputing in a ferryboat on the atomic philosophy, and who, whenever either of them appealed to him for his judgment on the controverted points, "*lâchait de temps en temps un hum !*" in the tone of a man who says very much less than he thinks, so that the controversialists awaited his decision with respect. But when he finally made off for shore with his wallet, and was seen to be nothing but a *moine mendiant*, the illusion was dispelled. Meanwhile, "*son hum ! discret et lâché à propos l'avait fait juger capable.*" Molière turned to Baron, who, then a child, was one of the passengers, and said, "See there now, my boy, what silence can do when it is properly kept." That man of few words, Geoffrey Day, in *Under the Greenwood Tree*, is thus admiringly appraised by his neighbours : "Silent ? ah, he is silent ! That man's silence is wonderful to listen to. Every moment of it is brimming over with sound understanding." Comprehensive talkers are apt to be tiresome when we are not athirst for information ; but, to be quite fair, as George Eliot puts it, we must admit that superior reticence is a good deal due to the lack of matter. "Speech is often barren ; but silence does



not necessarily brood over a full nest." And then, working out that figure, your still fowl, it is added, blinking at you without remark, may all the while be sitting on one addled nest-egg; and when it takes to cackling, will have nothing to announce but that addled delusion.

Count Grammont's portrait of the Earl of Oxford of his time, one of the first peers of the realm, is that of a very handsome man, and "of the Order of the Garter, which greatly adds to an air naturally noble. In short, from his outward appearance you would suppose he was possessed of some sense; but as soon as you hear him speak you are perfectly convinced to the contrary." Mr. Rushworth, in Miss Austen's *Mansfield Park*, secures the good word of Sir Thomas Bertram by his judicious reticence; and we are told how "by looking, as he really felt, most exceedingly pleased with Sir Thomas's good opinion, and saying scarcely anything, he did his best towards preserving that good opinion a little longer." The lips of a fool will swallow up himself—or, as a commentator expresses it, he is the sepulchre of his own reputation; for as long as he was silent, you were willing to give him credit for the usual share of intelligence, but no sooner does he blurt out some astounding blunder—no sooner does he begin to prattle forth his egotism and vanity, than your respect is exchanged for contempt or compassion. Jeremy Taylor says of the ineloquent man that holds his tongue, that by so doing he shall be sure not to be troublesome to the company, nor become tedious with multiplicity of idle talk: "he shall be presumed wise, and oftentimes is so." It is of the affectedly grave that Fuller says, they do wisely to counterfeit a reservedness, and to keep their chests always locked—not for fear any should steal treasure thence, but lest some should look in and

see that there is nothing in them. Some by their faces, he elsewhere remarks, may pass current enough till they cry themselves down by their speaking, "for men know the bell is cracked when they hear it tolled." It tolls the knell of their reputation for wisdom; and a knell by cracked metal is a sorry sound, that no-way tends to dignify the departed.

Many are the irrepressible cacklers who, having really nothing to say, will—not say it. On the contrary, they overflow with rapid small talk, infinitesimally small, less than nothing, though made up of nothings. Incontinent of chatter, they are afflicted and afflict others with a very diarrhœa of words, words, words. *On parle souvent sans avoir rien à dire*, says Voltaire in one of his epigrams. There is a time to keep silence, and a time to speak, the Wise King warns us; but unwise gabblers refuse to take the warning. The time to speak they know well; and it is in season and out of season. When that wordy swaggerer Pistol is being thrust down-stairs, "If he do nothing but speak nothing, he shall be nothing here," Falstaff says. "As a man would say in a word of two syllables, nothing," quoth Ben Jonson. Epicharmus describes a certain prater as the reverse of clever at talking, yet unable to hold his tongue: οὐ λέγειν δεινός, ἀλλὰ σιγᾶν ἀδύνατος. Cato took pride in answering the reproach of being systematically silent, by the promise that he would be found quite ready to speak when he should have something to say. Apropos of habitually silent people, Montesquieu, in the Persian Letters, refers to an opposite class as far more singular than these *gens taciturnes*, and gifted with a really extraordinary talent; those, namely, who are able to talk without having anything whatever to say: *ce sont ceux qui savent parler sans rien dire*. Coleridge deemed it

characteristic of the Roman dignity and sobriety, that, in the Latin, "to favour with the tongue," *favere linguâ*, means, to be silent; whereas we English say, "Hold your tongue!" as if it were an injunction that could only be carried into effect by manual force, or the pincers of the forefinger and thumb. "It is not women and Frenchmen only that would rather have their tongues bitten than bitted, and feel their souls in a strait-waistcoat, when they are obliged to remain silent." Calm silence when there is nothing to be said, Mr. Charles Reade calls a "sure proof of intelligence." Macaulay is severe on Goldsmith's lack of self-command to hold his tongue, albeit painfully sensible of his inferiority in conversation, and feeling every failure keenly: his animal spirits and vanity were always impelling him to try to do the one thing which he could not do. Boswell once observed of him, that he had a great deal of gold in his cabinet, but, not content with that, was always taking out his purse. "Yes, Sir," Johnson assented, "and that so often an empty purse." Good things he could say, and did say, sometimes, very good things; but his foible for affecting airy facility in badinage and smartness exposed him to sneers as one of the irrepressibles who can

"Never hold their tongue a minute,  
While all they say has nothing in it."

Swift remarks, that the chameleon, who is said to feed upon nothing but air, has of all animals the nimblest tongue. In Gay's Fables—

"An Ant there was, whose forward prate  
Controlled all matters in debate;  
Whether he knew the thing or no,  
His tongue eternally would go,  
For he had impudence at will," etc.

"*Voilà le principe de toute impertinence*," exclaims La Bruyère, "*de n'avoir pas assez d'esprit pour bien parler, ni assez de jugement pour se taire*." Speak not at all, in any

wise, till you have somewhat to speak, is one of the golden rules enforced by Mr. Carlyle, who reckons among the most indisputable malefactors omitted, or inserted, in the Criminal Calendar, the chatterer who "babbles he knows not what, and has clapped no bridle on his tongue, but lets it run racket, ejecting chatter and futility." The candid judge, says he elsewhere, will, in general, require that a speaker, "in so extremely serious a Universe as this of ours," have something to speak about. And again, in another place: "No mortal has a right to wag his tongue without saying something: he knows not what mischief he does, past computation; scattering words without meaning." When Lady Sarah, in one of Joanna Baillie's comedies, after verbosely haranguing and lecturing Miss Seabright, pauses one instant for a reply, and then complains, "You don't answer me,"—"Indeed, ma'am, I had better not," says the damsel, "for I don't know what to say."

*Lady S.*—You are a very prudent young lady, indeed, to make that a reason for holding your tongue.

*Sophia.*—It is a reason, indeed, which elder ladies do not always attend to."

The teller of the story of Cousin Phillis, contrasting past and present in her rustic home, lays stress on the fact that until now whatever he had heard spoken in that happy household were simple words of true meaning: if they had aught to say, they said it; and if any one preferred silence, nay if all did so, there were no spasmodic efforts to talk for the sake of talking. When Rolando, in *The Honeymoon*, compares a chattering woman's tongue to a watermill, he corrects himself, and withdraws the simile, because a mill, to give it motion, waits for grist;

"Now, whether she has aught to say or no,  
A woman's tongue will go for exercise."



Bishop Butler, in his sermon on the government of the tongue, laments that incontinent chatterers, "as they cannot for ever go on talking of nothing," will go on from bad to worse, from mere negation to positive mischief, in the way of scandal and defamation of character, "divulging of secrets, their own secrets as well as those of others, anything rather than be silent." One occasion of silence, therefore, the good prelate takes to be obvious: namely, when a man has nothing to say, or nothing but what is better unsaid. Tobacco-smoke is panegyricized by Smelfungus as the one element in which, by our European manners, men can sit silent together without embarrassment, and where no man is bound to speak one word more than he has actually and veritably got to say. "Nay, rather every man is admonished and enjoined by the laws of honour, and even of personal ease, to stop short of that point; at all events, to hold his peace and take to his pipe again, the instant he *has* spoken his meaning, if he chance to have any." Boileau in one of his satires exposes the wordy folk "*qui, parlant beaucoup, ne disent jamais rien*"; and in another condescends to such small deer as

"Celle qui de son chat fait son seul entretien,  
Celle qui toujours parle et ne dit jamais rien."

Mrs. Wilson, in *Wildfell Hall*, is described repeating her oft-repeated trivialities, "uttered apparently for the sole purpose of denying a moment's rest to her inexhaustible organs of speech." Is it that people think it a duty to be always talking? muses Mrs. Graham in the same book,—"*and so never pause to think, but fill up with aimless trifles and vain repetitions when subjects of real interest fail to present themselves? or do they really take a pleasure in such discourse?*" The author of *Essays on Social Subjects* accepts as very true the allegation that we often have to talk for mere talking's



sake, and scouts as "unpracticable nonsense" what philosophers have advised about never opening our mouths unless we have something to say ; but none the more are those people spared who throw themselves into the situation with a spurious, unnatural relish, and use it as a sort of practice-ground for their powers. An alas ! is bestowed both on those who talk and us that hear, if the said talkers ever come to value themselves upon this factitious vivacity, and keep it up deliberately for our entertainment after their own is spent. Like those in Churchill—

"Who, to be silent always loth,  
Would speak on either side, or both ;"

but unlike them in this alleged characteristic,

"That orators professed, 'tis known,  
Talk not for our sake, but their own."

Most people, it has been said, must in the course of their lives have admired and envied the graceful facility with which what may be termed the Irish style of conversation is kept up ; though, when we come to examine the talk, it is found to be based on saying everything that comes into the mind, and on revealing the smallest facts of personal history.

"Better than such discourse doth silence long,  
Long, barren silence, square with my desire,"

says Wordsworth, and says well. Mr. Carson, in the American story, is represented as one of those persons who seem to think it a social duty never to allow of a moment's truce from talk : we see and hear him labouring assiduously at what he considers his vocation, the prevention of an interval of silence in any spot of earth where he can possibly make himself heard. Nothing in common have the like of him with La Bruyère's *homme du meilleur esprit*, who *parle peu*, whenever substantial matter

fails him, or he is palpably and self-perceptibly not in the vein. "Chante-t-on avec un rhume? Ne faut-il pas attendre que la voix revienne?" Cato declares that man to approach nearest to a god who knows when and how to be silent : *Proximus ille Deo est qui scit ratione tacere*. Most undivine accordingly is the fatal facility of that gift of the gab which is satirized in the "politician" in *Hudibras* :—

" But still his tongue ran on, the less  
Of weight it bore, with greater ease ;  
And with its everlasting clack  
Set all men's ears upon the rack."

The editor of the Biglow Papers makes the discovery that "nothing" takes longer in the saying than anything else, for, as *ex nihilo nihil fit*, so from one polypus *nothing* any number of similar ones may be produced. Mrs. Allen, in *Northanger Abbey*, is admirably sketched as a person whose vacancy of mind and incapacity for thinking were such, that, as she never talked a great deal, so she could never be entirely silent ; and therefore, while she sat at her work, if she lost her needle, or broke her thread, if she heard a carriage in the street, or saw a speck upon her gown, she must observe it aloud, and make a subject of it, *faute de mieux*. Much brighter and brisker spirits than hers are all too many who cultivate "that sweetest art, to talk all day ; be eloquent—and nothing say," as some one has tersely Englished the Italian.

" E quella soavissima  
Arte tanto eloquente  
Che sa sì longo spazio  
Parlar, senza dir niente."

## XIX.

### ANSWERED UNHEARD.

PROVERBS xviii. 13.

TO give a reply before the question has been fully heard, implies some deficiency in either good manners or good sense, or both. "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him." And if this be true in private discourse, when from eagerness to appear gifted with superlative keenness of ready insight, penetrating sagacity, and intuitive mastery of a subject, or of all subjects, an impatient debater or controversialist interrupts his interlocutor, and makes short work of his argument part-heard, and ignores all that was yet to come; much more is it, in Bishop Patrick's words, "a shame to a magistrate, if, in matters of justice and judgment, he come to a resolution, before he hath taken full cognizance of them." Nicodemus did well to start the seasonable query, "Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doeth?" Festus did well to protest that it was not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which was accused had the accusers face to face, and had licence to answer for himself concerning the charge laid against him. And in the same spirit, and by the same rule, otherwise applied, had Felix done well to defer hearing Paul's defence until Paul's accusers were present: "I will hear thee," said he, "when thine accusers are also come." He that is first in his own cause seemeth just, says another of the proverbs of Solomon; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him. *Audire alteram*

*partem*, is a first duty in judicial inquiries, and indeed in every-day life.

True that, as one of Mr. Trollope's doctors objects, if in this world we suspend our judgment till we've heard all that can be said on both sides of every question, we should never come to any judgment at all. Poor Lord Polkemmet, of the Scottish bench, was heard to say, "Weel, Maister Askine, I heard you, and I thocht ye were richt; and I heard you, Dauvid (David Cathcart), and I thocht ye were richt; and now I hae heard Maister Clerk, and I think he is the richtest amang ye. That bathers me, ye see; sae I maun tak hame the process, and wamble it in my wame a wee"—a pet phrase, it would seem, of this ingenious and ingenuous lord of session. It was pre-eminently characteristic of Daguesseau, that he habitually collected, collated, examined, weighed, and compared *en tout les raisons des deux parties*; and with such art and precision was this effected, that nothing on either side was overlooked, and that no one among the numerous listeners in court could predict what the *avis* of the *avocat-général* would be, until he drew to a conclusion. Benvenuto Cellini is all admiration for the king's lieutenant in civil affairs before whom he had to plead in the great hall of the Palais at Paris,—the counsellors sometimes speaking all together: "To my great surprise this extraordinary magistrate, with the true countenance of a Pluto, seemed by his attitude to listen now to one, now to another, and constantly answered with the utmost propriety; and as I always took great pleasure in contemplating the efforts of genius, of what nature soever, this appeared to me so wonderful that I would not have missed seeing it for any consideration." Lord Skindeep in the comedy, when told that if he be not quick he will not hear a word of the debate, replies airily, "All the better; for as



we have made up our opinion on the question, nobody can say we're prejudiced by the arguments of either party." In contrast with this practical philosophy of an imaginary peer, take the avowal of an actual and exemplary member of the other House, Francis Horner, who on the occasion of a great debate and division on the Corn Laws, in 1815, stated that he had "come down to the House with a sincere desire of hearing the question fully discussed ; for, however strong might be his own opinions, he thought it due to the importance of the subject to hear the opinions of all who had considered it, and to ascertain the various modes in which the evidence adduced had struck various minds." Few public men, it has been said, can wait to take up a definite position in party politics till they have thoroughly mastered and impartially weighed all sides of the great questions with which they have to deal : in public affairs, action is an essential requisite to a complete understanding of them ; it is only by being involved in them that you can see deeply into them ; nor is it until you hear views diametrically opposed to those you have inherited, set forth by an opponent of obviously superior powers, and of manifest sincerity of conviction, that you see how much is to be said on and for the other side. The lad of a Tory turn, says Mr. Charles Kingsley, will read Tory books, the lad of a Radical turn, Radical books ; and the "green spectacles of party and prejudice will be deepened in hue as he reads on, instead of being thrown away for the clear white glass of truth, which will show him reason in all honest sides, and good in all honest men." Candid reviewers say, let us, by all means, hear the extreme people on both sides : what these say and think, whether we believe it or not, is, in a certain way, part of the facts of the case ; nor can we fully understand a controversy till we know how it looks to those who carry each side

to its extremest point,—though still less can we understand it till we know how it looks to those who stand between the two, and who see both sides of the shield instead of only one. All error, observed the late Samuel Bailey, is the consequence of narrow and partial views, and can be removed only by having a question presented in all its possible bearings, or, in other words, by unlimited discussion. According to Mr. Stuart Mill, it might be plausibly maintained that in almost every one of the leading controversies, past or present, in social philosophy, both sides were in the right in what they affirmed, though wrong in what they denied ; and that if either could have been made to take the other's views in addition to its own, little more would have been needed to make its doctrine correct. In his review of Grote's *History of Greece* he pays a special tribute of admiration to that habitual love of fair play, and of hearing both sides of a case, which was more or less a quality of the Greeks generally, but had so firm a hold on the Athenians that it did not desert them under the most passionate excitement. To their "multitudinous judicial tribunals the Athenians were indebted" for this. It is well said, that every man who knows anything of courts of justice knows how convincing the arguments on one side seem, even to indifferent persons, till something equally or more convincing is brought forward on the other side ; and a candid plaintiff or defendant will be perfectly astonished to find how much can be said against his own case which he never before thought of—enough commonly, if not to upset his own case, yet fully to justify the adverse party in disputing it. Sententious Seneca passes sentence on the judge that will hear but one side :—

"Si statuit aliquid, parte inauditâ alterâ,  
Æquum licet statuerit, haud æquus est."

Or, in old-fashioned English, Who judgment gives, and

will but one side hear, Is, though he judge right, no good justicer. Aristides, they tell us, would lend but one ear to any one who accused an absent "party," and used to hold his hand on the other; intimating, that he reserved an ear for the absentee accused. When Caleb Williams, accused and condemned unheard, exclaims, in reproachful appeal to "the object of all his reverence, whom he once ventured to call his mother," Can she wish not to hear him? can she have no anxiety for his justification, whatever may be the unfavourable impression received against him? her answer is, "Not an atom. I have neither wish nor inclination to hear you." And to his renewed remonstrance, Can she think of condemning a man, when she has heard only one side of his story? the rejoinder is instant: "Indeed I can. The maxim of hearing both sides may be very well in some cases; but it would be ridiculous to suppose that there are not other cases that, at the first mention, are too clear to admit the shadow of a doubt." Worthy of Robespierre was the decree proposed by him to the Convention in 1794, and passed, the substantive law of which, as expounded by Macaulay, was simply this, that whatever the Revolutionary Tribunal of Paris (no longer content with forty, fifty, sixty heads in a morning) should think pernicious to the Republic, was a capital crime; while the law of evidence was, that whatever satisfied the jurors was sufficient proof; and the law of procedure was, that there should be an advocate against the prisoner, and no advocate for him; and it was expressly declared that, if the jurors were in any manner convinced of the guilt of the prisoner, they might convict him without hearing a single witness. As every man in the Convention itself felt the knife at his throat, there was a murmur at the proposed decree, and a motion for adjournment; but the intervention of Barère over-awed

opposition ; and Barère, be it remembered, was the man whose voice had been the loudest in opposition to the beseeching friends of Danton, when they mustered courage to pray that the Convention would at least hear him in his own defence, before they sent him to certain death.

Plutarch repeats what was told of Alexander in the first years of his reign, that when capital causes were brought before him, he used to stop one of his ears with his hand while the plaintiff was opening the indictment, that he might reserve it perfectly unprejudiced for hearing the defendant. But this is Aristides over again.

The author of *Hudibras* puts this query among his *Miscellaneous Thoughts* :—

“ What makes all subjects discontent  
Against a prince's government,  
And princes take as great offence  
At subjects' disobedience,  
That neither the other can abide,  
But too much reason on each side ? ”

The late Mr. Nassau Senior, in one of his dissertations on political philosophy, drew a contrast between an individual, who can generally be forced to hear both sides of the question, and a nation, which can *not*, and never does so voluntarily. It reads only its own state papers, he said, its own newspapers, and its own pamphlets ; it hears only its own speakers, accepts all their statements of facts and of laws, and holds itself to be obviously and notoriously right on every international contest. As to individuals, on the other hand, there are few disputes in which each party is not in some degree in the wrong, or in which he can avoid perceiving that he is so, if once he be compelled to give a deliberate attention to all his opponent's arguments. It was in reference to the never-explained, and now probably



never-to-be-explained mystery of the Byron separation, that Leigh Hunt said in his Autobiography how long he had been convinced, and every day strengthened the conviction, that no domestic dispute, even if it were desirable or proper to investigate it, can ever be thoroughly understood unless you hear both parties, and know their entire relative situations, together with the interests and passions of those about them.

In entering upon any scientific pursuit, one of the student's first endeavours, as Sir John Herschell would impress upon him, should be to strengthen himself by something of an effort and a resolve for the unprejudiced admission of any conclusion which shall appear to be supported by observation and argument, even if it should prove adverse to notions he may have previously formed or taken up on the credit of others. "Such an effort is the first approach towards mental purity. It is the 'euphrasy and rue' with which we must purge our sight before we can receive and contemplate as they are the lineaments of truth." The question, What is truth? has certainly, Mr. Lecky affirms, no prospect of obtaining a speedy answer; but the question, What is the spirit of truth? may, he thinks, be discussed with much greater prospect of agreement. By the spirit of truth, he means that frame of mind in which men who acknowledge their own fallibility, and who desire above all things to discover what is true, should adjudicate between conflicting arguments; who come to perceive that they never can be legitimately certain of the truth of what they have been taught till they have both examined its evidence and heard what can be said against it. Religious charity requires, said Sydney Smith in his sermon upon it, that we should not judge any sect of Christians by the representations of their enemies alone, without hearing and reading what they have to say in

their own defence ; religious hatred (if there can be such a thing) is often founded on tradition, often on hearsay, often on the misrepresentations of notorious enemies ; without inquiry, without the slightest examination of opposite reasons and authorities, or consideration of that which the accused party has to offer for defence or explanation. "If charity be ever necessary, it is in those who know accurately neither the accusation nor the defence." Nor was the preacher ever slow to denounce, in other sermons, those who thus indulge more in the luxury of invective than in the labour of inquiry. In the case of any person whose judgment is really deserving of confidence, How has it become so ? asks Mr. Mill ; and the answer is, Because he has kept his mind open to criticism of his opinions and conduct ; because it has been his practice to listen to all that could be said against him ; because he has felt, that the only way in which a human being can make some approach to knowing the whole of a subject, is by hearing what can be said about it by persons of every variety of opinion, and studying all modes in which it can be looked at by every character of mind. "The steady habit of correcting and completing his own opinion by collating it with those of others, so far from causing doubt and hesitation in carrying it into practice, is the only stable foundation for a just reliance on it." Men may, as the Historian of Morals remarks of politics, study the debates of Parliament under the influence of a strong party bias, and may even pay more attention to the statements of one party than to those of the other ; but they never imagine that they can form an opinion by an exclusive study of what has been written on one side :—the two views of every question are placed in juxtaposition, and every one who is interested in the subject examines both.

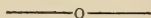
Cicero, "the greatest orator, save one, of antiquity," has

left it on record, as we are pertinently reminded in the *Essay on Liberty*, that he always studied his adversary's case with as great intensity as his own, if not still greater. And what Cicero practised as the means of forensic success, requires, as the essayist urges, to be imitated by all who study any subject in order to arrive at the truth. For he who knows only his own side of the case, is convicted of knowing little of that : his reasons may be good, and no one may have been able to refute them ; but if he is equally unable to refute the reasons on the opposite side, if he does not so much as know what they are, what rational ground has he for preferring either opinion ?

Before leaving the general subject of "Answered unheard," reference may be allowed, in passing, to a sort of constitutional or temperamental habit some people have of breaking in upon another speaker, before hearing him out, and on the assumption, complacent and satisfactory in them, provoking and often unjust to him, that they fully apprehend and comprehend his meaning, and will spare him, therefore, the superfluous trouble of further enunciating it. They, in point of fact, discourteously,—however innocent of designed offence,—answer the matter before they hear it, answer the man unheard. *Tu quidem ex ore orationem mihi eripis*—you are really taking the words out of my mouth. But the unheard ones might entirely alter the question. The author of *The Original* is sore against that "class of listeners who cut off everything that is said to them by answering before they have half heard, and of course for the most part very erroneously." This author was a London police magistrate, and knew the value of the maxim *de audiendo alteram partem*. And such "listeners" he pronounced "the most unsatisfactory of all, and the less one has to do with them the better." Some

people, said Swift, will never learn anything, because they understand everything too soon. Their impatience is as perverse and as unprofitable as Hotspur's in Shakspeare :—

“ Before the game's afoot, thou wilt let slip.”



## XX.

### BROTHERS AT STRIFE.

PROVERBS xviii. 19.

THE Book of Proverbs declares a brother offended to be harder to be won than a strong city ; “ and their contentions are like the bars of a castle.” It is evident by facts, observes a commentator on the passage, that when bitter contentions are excited among brethren or near relations, their resentment becomes more implacable, and the consequences more terrible, than in quarrels among strangers : it is more difficult to conciliate their differences than to take a fortified city ; and their stubborn minds resist all endeavours to bend them to a cordial reconciliation, with a resistance like that of the iron bars of a castle.

Love and Hate are half-brothers in Spenser's allegory, “ though of contrarie natures to each other,” “ both strongly arm'd, as fearing one another.” In a later book of the *Faerie Queene* we have “ two comely squires ” in conflict, brothers, and most unbrotherly, Bracidas and Amidas, “ bending against themselves their cruel arms.” Manuel and Cæsar, the royal brothers in Schiller's fateful tragedy, *Die Braut von Messina*, cherish unmitigable deadly hate, that spurns all kindred ties, all youthful fond affections ; triumphant over



nature's holiest bands, bursts forth that wild storm of brothers' hate. The mother that in vain has sought to reconcile them, foresees and foretells when her dim eye shall behold them, "foot to foot, close, like the Theban pair, with maddening gripe, and fold each other in a last embrace—each press with vengeful thrust the dagger home,"—nor even then shall discord be appeased; the very flame of their funeral pyre shall tower dissevered.

Oliver and Orlando, in *As You Like It*, have their hands at each other's throat, and keep them there despite old Adam's piteous appeal, "Sweet masters, be patient; for your father's remembrance, be at accord;" but in their case, bitter as the feud is, reconciliation ensues in a fifth act, nay, earlier, in a fourth; when the elder brother, harder to be won than a strong city, and, as the wrong-doer, the more implacable of the two, by the rule of *odisse quem leseris*, is saved from the "sucked and hungry lioness" by the younger, that found him sleeping, and twice indeed turned his back, and proposed to leave him so; but kindness, in its best sense of kinship,—

"But kindness, nobler ever than revenge,  
Made him give battle to the lioness,"

and anon there was reconciliation, and tears "most kindly bathed" their "recountments" each to each. No such turning-point in the strife of Edgar and Edmund in *King Lear*. None such in the fratricidal feud of Ferrex and Porrex in Sackville's tragedy, the oldest in English extant. *Tanta est discordia fratrum*, says Ovid. Sophocles paints it at its blackest in the feud between Polynices and Eteocles. Livy and his like exemplify it in Romulus and Remus. Gibbon exposes it in the "unnatural contest" of Constantine, Constantius, and Constans. Arguing that Lewis the Eleventh was not incapable of the crime imputed to him, of having taken off by poison his brother the Duke of Guienne, Michelet

speaks incidentally of that crime as exceedingly common in that day. It would seem, he says, that fratricide, enrolled at this period in the Ottoman law, and ordained by Mahomet II., was in general use in the fifteenth century among Christian (even most Christian) princes.

Hawthorne somewhere moralizes on those family feuds which render hatred the more deadly, by the dead and corrupted love that they intermingle with its native poison.

Every dissension of man with man, according to Dr. Thomas Brown, excites in us a feeling of painful incongruity; but we feel a peculiar "incongruity" in the discord of those whom one roof has sheltered in early life, and whose dust should, as Cicero puts it, be mingled under one common stone—*sepulchra habere communia*. History is rife with specimens of this incongruity, more easily to be remembered than contrasted ones of the saving grace of congruity (as schoolmen talk). One thinks of antagonistic brothers at all degrees of antagonism—some cases being where the enmity, like the Irishman's reciprocity, is all on one side. There are Caracalla and Geta, for instance, sons of Severus, and joint emperors of Rome,—of whom the disappointed father foretold, in his anguish, that the weaker and milder of his sons would fall a sacrifice to the stronger and fiercer, who, in his turn, would be ruined by his own vices. The divided form of government prescribed by Severus would, in Gibbon's opinion, have proved a source of discord between the most affectionate brothers; it was impossible that it could long subsist between two implacable enemies, who neither desired nor could trust a reconciliation. It was obvious that one only could reign, and that the other must fall; and each of them, as the historian shows, judging of his

rival's designs by his own, guarded his life with the most jealous vigilance from the repeated attacks of poison or the sword. "Their rapid journey through Gaul and Italy, during which they never ate at the same table or slept in the same house, displayed to the provinces the odious spectacle of fraternal discord." The emperors are described as meeting only in public, in the presence of their afflicted mother, and each surrounded by a numerous train of armed followers ; while, even on these occasions of ceremony, the dissimulation of courts could ill disguise the rancour of their hearts. If Severus too truly foretold the event, happier was he in dying first than had been Philip V. of Macedon, in living to see Demetrius done to death by Perseus. Both Perseus and Caracalla are credited with a certain amount of remorse, but hardly of the nobler sort that afflicted Timoleon in respect of his slaughtered elder brother, Timophanes. Records of fratricide dating from the firstborn of Adam, would comprise mention of the sons of David ; of Aristobulus and Antigonus, whose blood mingled on the pavement of the Temple ; of Aristobulus and Alexander Jannæus ; of Herod and his brother Joseph ; of Gundebald the Burgundian, a triple fratricide—for in succession he slew his brothers Chilperic, Godemar, and Godesil, and to the too credulous and compassionating Avitus, Bishop of Vienne, he professed to be very sorry about the first and second crimes, before he turned his hand to the third ; and again, of Henry II. of Castile, who slew his brother Don Pedro with his own hand ; and of Aurungzebe, who put to death all three brothers, Múrad, Dára, and Shujà, after they had vainly struggled against him year by year continually. The list of brothers at strife, and hard to be won, may be swelled by the names of the sons of Childebert, William I., and of Henry II. Peter the Cruel and his brothers would figure in it—not

without the bloody stain of fratricide to blot the page. But it is not pleasing to offer a reader dark passages of fraternal hatred, as Lord Lytton finds occasion to remark by the mouth of one of his autobiographic heroes, who reminds his brother of Eteocles and Polynices, and of their very ashes refusing to mingle. "I know not," Devereux tells Gerald, "if our ashes will exhibit so laudable an antipathy; but I think our hearts and hands will do so while a spark of life animates them; yes, though our blood," he adds, in a voice described as quivering with furious emotion, "prevents our contest by the sword, it prevents not the hatred and the curses of the heart,"—of which, accordingly, "our hero," a mere youngster, is lavish enough, and to spare. If he apologizes in the sequel for detailing these ugly experiences, he does so on the plea that in the record of all passions there is a moral; and that it is wise to see how vast a sum of units of childish animosity swell, when they are once brought into a heap by some violent event, and told over by the nice accuracy of revenge. A friend to whom Rogers once said, "Why, you and Mr. — live like two brothers," replied with effusion, "God forbid!" And the old poet was fain or free to own that most of the "misunderstandings" which one hears of, exist between brothers and sisters. Mr. Thackeray represents the Baronet and his brother in *Vanity Fair* as having every reason which brothers possibly can have for being by the ears; above all, these money transactions, speculations in life and death, silent battles for reversionary spoil, "make brothers very loving towards each other" as the world goes; and he professes to have known a five-pound note interpose and knock up a half-century's attachment between two brethren. "The elder and younger son of the house of Crawley were, like the gentleman and lady in the weatherbox, never at home



together—they hated each other cordially." It is bred in the bone, with some. It runs in the blood. And the running of bad blood in the veins may tend to the shedding of it too,—bad or good; and brothers in blood may thus become bloody brothers—shedding like water what is thicker than water, or should be, according to all laws of affinity, set at nought however by those who, being so close of kin, are yet so far from kind.

Bosola tells Duke Ferdinand, when the brothers have compassed the death of their sister, the Duchess of Malfi,—

"You have bloodily approved the ancient truth,  
That kindred commonly do worse agree  
Than remote strangers."

*Acerrima proximorum odia*, says Tacitus: the hatred of those nearest of kin is the bitterest of all. One of the chapters of Swift and Arbuthnot's *History of John Bull* opens with a reference to the old observation, that the quarrels of relations are harder to reconcile than any other injuries from friends, fret and gall more, and the memory of them is not so easily obliterated. And Æsop's story is quoted, of the bird that was grieved extremely at being wounded with an arrow feathered with his own wing,—and again of the oak, that let many a heavy groan, when he was cleft with a wedge of his own timber. One of Butler's satires has a picture of "twin spirits so kind-hearted," who

"No sooner several ways are gone,  
But by themselves are set upon,  
Surprised like brother against brother,  
And put to th' sword by one another;  
So much more fierce are civil wars  
Than those between mere foreigners."

The very last chapter of Gibbon's great work, in relating the domestic quarrels of the Romans, and how,

after the death of Nicholas the Fourth, Rome was abandoned for six months to the fury of civil war, describes the work of destruction as consummated by the blind and thoughtless vengeance of factions; and then we read,—the italics being the historian's very own,—“In comparing the *days* of foreign, with the *ages* of domestic hostility, we must pronounce that the latter have been far more ruinous to the city.” And Petrarch is quoted to the purpose, where he tells Rome, in his *Carmina Latina*, that no Barbarian can boast the merit of that stupendous destruction; it was perpetrated by her own contending citizens and sons. “National enmities have always been fiercest among borderers,” writes Lord Macaulay; and he shows how the enmity between the Highland borderer and the Lowland borderer along the whole frontier was the growth of ages, and was kept fresh by constant injuries. Hartley Coleridge somewhere suggestively remarks, that even animals the most fearful of every other species, will fight desperately against their own; and that the Oriental nations, who are so quickly put to rout by European troops, persevere, with mad constancy, in their domestic combats. Sir Walter Scott accounts for the deep and envenomed feelings of hostility between two of his characters by the illustration, “as those of country gentlemen often become, who, having little to do or think of, are but too apt to spend their time in nursing and cherishing petty causes of wrath against their near neighbours.” A modern bard, touching on the strife of classes, has to report of it, historically reviewed, that,—

“In opposites not always seen to glow,  
It swelled in similars, as if its flood  
Raged hottest in the most related blood.”

National prejudices and hatreds seldom extend, Adam Smith maintains, beyond neighbouring nations. “We

very weakly, and foolishly, perhaps, call the French \* our natural enemies; and they, perhaps, as weakly and foolishly, consider us in the same manner. Neither they nor we bear any sort of envy to the prosperity of China or Japan." *Inter finitimos . . . immortale odium*, has not Juvenal told the tale, of Ombos and Tentyra? And of the bounds where the rival realms of "Lusitania and her sister meet," a stanza in *Childe Harold* expressively says,—

"But these between a silver streamlet glides,  
And scarce a name distinguisheth the brook,  
Though rival kingdoms press its verdant sides.  
Here leans the idle shepherd on his crook,  
And vacant on the rippling waves doth look,  
That peaceful still 'twixt bitterest foemen flow."

So Cowper, in the opening of the second book of *The Task* :—

"Lands intersected by a narrow frith  
Abhor each other. Mountains interposed,  
Make enemies of nations, who had else  
Like kindred drops been mingled into one."

But where defined boundary lines are altogether want-

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\* Miss Aikin, writing in 1829 to Dr. Channing, incidentally remarks, "I am afraid that Canada keeps up in your country a somewhat bitter feeling against England which *here* is not reciprocated; for when we want to hate our neighbours, the French are far more handy than you."—*Life and Letters of Lucy Aikin*, p. 206.

Of the great civil war in America, cisatlantic critics observed, that it derived much of its peculiar ferocity from the circumstance that every insolent, spiteful, and savage word uttered on the one side was taken up by the other with an instant and perfect comprehension of its meaning; and that it was precisely because North and South understood each other without the help of an interpreter that they hated each other with a bitterness unknown in European politics. Hence an expression of doubt whether England and France would be much better friends if every Englishman spoke French, and every Frenchman English, like a native.

ing, all the more sharply pronounced is the hostility of neighbouring races. The deadly hatred that grew up between the Franks and Saxons has been called inevitable, as between two warlike and restless races, separated by a doubtful and unmarked border, on vast level plains, with no natural boundary, dense forests, a chain of mountains, or any large river or lake. At the time of the Syrian massacres, what was here complained of as aggravating the difficulty, was the unfortunate juxtaposition and intermixture of the Druse and Maronite population: in other wild districts, hostile tribes have frontiers to cross before they fight, but the rival races of the Lebanon occupy the same valleys, and live side by side in the same villages.

M. Dozy asserts, in his *Histoire des Musulmans d'Espagne*, that in all the history of Europe there is nothing to be compared with the hatred that existed between the two Arab races, the Yemenites and the Maäddites, who divided the dominion of Arabia; sometimes dormant, it was more often in a state of fierce activity, and the combatants massacred one another on the most trifling grounds—because a melon had been plucked in a garden, or a leaf had been twitched in passing from a vine. A philosophic investigator of the natural history of cruelty, in its varying phases and stages of development, observes of it, that when spoken of as ruthless, pitiless, blood-stained, fiendish, we somehow involuntarily recall the family feuds of ancient Greece or mediæval Europe, where the diminished area of strife lent the virulence of a closer personality to the more elementary emotion. Macaulay says of the politician where factions run high, that the strongest aversion which he can feel to any foreign power is the ardour of friendship, when compared with the loathing which he entertains towards those domestic foes with whom he is



cooped up in a narrow space, with whom he lives in a constant interchange of petty injuries and insults, and from whom, in the day of their success, he has to expect severities far beyond any that a conqueror from a distant country would inflict. Different shades of the same colour do not harmonize so well as opposite colours, says Michelet; "and all great hatreds are between relatives." In his history of the Third Crusade we see each side get to hate itself more than the enemy. Richard is less the enemy of Saladin than of Philip-Augustus; and Saladin detests the Assassins and the Alides more than the Christians. In his account of the Flemish Wars, again, describing the manufacturing rivalries in the hamlets of Flanders, "Hence, terrible hates," he tells us, "inexpiable deeds of violence, sieges of Troy or Jerusalem against some paltry burgh; the infinite of passion in the infinitely little." His chapter on feudalism in the fifteenth century records of feudal families, that, separated by old hatreds, they rarely allied themselves with their neighbour; to be neighbour, was to be foe; they rather sought, even at the extremity of the kingdom, alliance with the most distant stranger. And that is a significant passage in which, in a subsequent volume, the historian of France traces the rivalry and deep-seated grudge between Dinant and Bouvignes. What ought to have cemented a good understanding between the rival towns, he shows to have served, on the contrary, to increase and complicate their hate:—intermarriages produced innumerable clashings of interest and constant lawsuits, in addition to the municipal animosity of the two towns; and thus, "knowing one another, and detesting one another, they spent their whole life in mutual watchings and espial," till outrages and insults came to be bandied to and fro; Crève-cœur's tower on one side the stream, and Proudmount's

tower on the other, having been seemingly built on purpose to facilitate the interchange of wrongs.

Prescott says of the numerous petty States which rose from the ruins of the ancient monarchy of Spain, that they seemed to regard each other with a fiercer hatred even than that with which they viewed the enemies of their faith : more Christian blood was wasted in these national feuds, than in all their encounters with the infidel. In another of his histories, that of the conquest of Peru, he describes the struggle of the battle of Las Salinas as desperate, for it was not that of the white man against the defenceless Indian, but of Spaniard against Spaniard, who fought with a hate to which national antipathy was as nothing—a hate strong in proportion to the strength of the ties which had been rent asunder.

Dean Milman's account of the Mokawkas and the whole Coptic population preferring to the rule of those who asserted two natures in Christ, that of those (the Saracens) who altogether denied His divinity, is designed to illustrate "the principle that religious hatred is more intense against those who differ the least in opinion." Montesquieu broadly affirms, in the *Persian Letters*, that, *en fait de religion, les plus proches sont les plus grands ennemis*. Mr. Trollope's Eleanor, in *Barchester Towers*, tells an earnest dignitary of the Church, "I never saw anything like you clergymen, you are always thinking of fighting each other." He defends the practice on principle, as a good churchman militant ; and when she rejoins, "Ah, but you wage your wars about trifles so bitterly," his answer is, that wars about trifles are always bitter, especially among neighbours. When the differences are great, and the parties comparative strangers, men quarrel with courtesy. "What combatants are ever so eager as brothers?" It has been suggested as plausible, that men's most violent prejudices have a close

affinity with what they most like, from which they are separated by an invisible line : thus, religious parties that hold *almost* every belief in common, hate one another most fervently ; and even where a man neither knows his own opinions nor those of his theological opponent, it is very possible for a strong prejudice to exist, founded on a mere supposition of minute difference. Macaulay taunted orthodoxy with being more shocked by the priests of Rome than by the priests of Kalee, and with deeming the plain red-brick building where uneducated men hear a half-educated man talk of the Christian law of love and the Christian hope of glory, to be unworthy of the indulgence reserved for the shrine where the Thug suspends a portion of the spoils of murdered travellers, and for the car which is or was said to grind its way through the bones of self-immolated pilgrims. Nothing is so difficult, according to a dissertator on contrasts of opinion, as to separate the substance from the form, and to discriminate between essential and trifling issues ; but it is at all events clear that the tendency is entirely towards the exaggeration of apparent differences. We are shocked, he says, at the opinions which resemble our own, just as we are shocked at a monkey for being like a man. "It is the caricature, and not the total misunderstanding, which is irritating." Hence the very indignation with which we regard our opponents is accepted as a proof of the wide extent of our stock of common ideas.

"But pious men will stop each other's breath,  
And eat each other up (as spiders do)  
If they but differ a pin's point in faith."

The men who, says the Caxton Essayist, admit into faith no soothing element of brotherly love, are, no matter how sincere or how eloquent, the worst enemies to the party they espouse, and in critical periods of

history have been the destroyers of States, and the subverters of the causes they adopt. Religion, says Cowper, should extinguish strife,

“And make a calm of human life ;  
But friends that chance to differ  
On points which God has left at large,  
How fiercely will they meet and charge !  
No combatants are stiffer.”

Shaftesbury sneers at the “supernatural charity” that has “taught us the way of plaguing one another most devoutly. It has raised an antipathy which no temporal interest could ever do ; and entailed upon us a mutual hatred to all eternity.” Such passages abound in his writings, and in those of other distinguished unbelievers, the Bolingbrokes, Humes, Gibbons. In his letter on Enthusiasm, for instance, Shaftesbury maliciously observes, that “since first the snappish spirit got up in religion, all sects have been at it, as the saying is, ‘tooth and nail,’ and are never better pleased than in worrying one another without mercy.” In another treatise he complains that the simple honest precepts of peace and mutual love have, “by a sort of spiritual chymists, been so sublimated, as to become the highest corrosives ; and passing through their limbecks, have yielded the strongest spirit of mutual hatred and malignant persecution.” In another he remarks, that when all other animosities are allayed, and anger of the fiercest kind appeased, “the religious hatred, we find, continues still, as it began, without provocation or voluntary offence.” Bolingbroke, again, declares the clergy to have a much better title than the sons of Apollo to be called *gens irritabile vatum* ; and he would have relished to the full the flavour of a living philosopher’s remark, that our brother man is seldom so bitter against us, as when we refuse to adopt at once his notions of the infinite. He would more likely have demurred to Sir James Stephen’s



remark, that the *odium theologicum* is, after all, rather a vituperative than a malignant affection, even in its worst type. But he would have backed with eager emphasis the affirmation implied in Sir James's query, elsewhere propounded: "From speculations on the love of God to feelings of hatred to man, what polemic will not readily pass, whether his cap be red or black?" Hume speaks of the *Odium Theologicum* as "noted even to a proverb," and as meaning that degree of rancour which is the most furious and implacable. Sects of philosophy, in the ancient world, were more zealous than parties of religion; "but in modern times, parties of religion are more furious and enraged than the most cruel factions that ever arose from interest and ambition." Gibbon is happy in being able to back the Pagan historian Ammianus with the testimony of a Christian bishop, when to the experience of the former, which had convinced him that the enmity of the Christians towards each other surpassed the fury of savage beasts against man, he adds the pathetic lament of Gregory Nazianzen, that the kingdom of heaven was transformed, by discord, into the image of chaos, of a nocturnal tempest, and of hell itself. In the same chapter, Gibbon describes Liberius and Osius, in exile (A.D. 356), as soon becoming satisfied that the deserts of Libya, and the most barbarous tracts of Cappadocia, were less inhospitable than a residence in those cities in which "an Arian bishop could satiate, without restraint, the exquisite rancour of theological hatred." Swift impersonates a divine speaker, around whose head immortal glories shine, while thus she speaks,

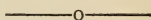
" — Religion is my name ;  
 An angel once, but now a fury grown,  
 Too often talked of, but too little known :  
 Is it for me, my sons, that ye engage,  
 And spend the fury of your idle rage ?

'Tis false ; unmanly spleen your bosom warms,  
 And a pretended zeal your fancy charms.  
 Where have I taught you in the sacred page  
 To construe moderation into rage ?”

Speaking of the most conspicuous of Wesley's anti-Arminian adversaries, the brothers Hill (Rowland and Sir Richard), and Augustus Montague Toplady, whose writings were so “thoroughly saturated with the essential acid of Calvinism,” Southey alleges that it would scarcely be credible that three persons, of good birth and education, and of unquestionable goodness and piety, should have carried on controversy “in so vile a manner, and with so detestable a spirit—if the hatred of theologians had not unhappily become proverbial.” The names of opprobrium flung to and fro in this sort of free fight, remind us of a celebrated letter of Paul Louis Courier : “ Il m'appelle jacobin, révolutionnaire, plagiaire, voleur, empoisonneur, faussaire, pestiféré ou pestifère, enragé, imposteur, calomniateur, libelliste, homme horrible, ordurier, grimacier, chiffonnier . . . . Je vois ce qu'il veut dire ; il entend que lui et moi sommes d'avis différent.” An eminent reviewer of our day has remarked, with regard to the distinction between theological language and secular, that when certain persons say, “You will infallibly be damned,” they must be understood to mean simply, “Your opinion differs from ours.” Mr. Motley cannot look back upon the passionate days of controversy between Maurice and Barneveld without being “appalled at the depths to which theological hatred could descend.” Yet, deeper and deeper still, might seem its subsequent descents, to some observers. M. Louis Veuillot is declared by a Saturday Reviewer to have probably never had an equal in the virulence, the coarseness, and the recklessness of his theological vituperation ; and a censor in the *British Quarterly* holds

that when the history of contemporary Atheism shall be written, Veuillot must come in for much of the blame, "for if anything could inspire a horror of religion, or extenuate the blasphemies of the time, it may be found in the career of this furious zealot." The contests of religious newspapers are apt to be personal, says Mr. Trollope, who speaks of heavy, biting, scorching attacks as the natural vehicle of Christian Examiners; for how, he asks, is a newspaper writer to refrain himself when his opponent is "incurring everlasting punishment, or, worse still, carrying away others to a similar doom, in that they read, and perhaps even purchase, that which the lost one has written?" Malice and mutual hatred come to be accounted a duty in certain cases; and peace there cannot be, because any resting from the duty of hatred towards those who reciprocally seem to lay the foundations of their creed in a dishonouring of God, is, in De Quincey's words, "impossible to aspiring human nature." Rousseau describes two such conflicting parties as fastening each on the other in the extreme of fury, resembling rather enraged wolves *acharnés à s'entre-déchirer*, than Christians and philosophers who sought to enlighten and convince each other, and bring back the erring into the way of truth. Poundtext and Kettle-drummle, in the camp of the Covenanters at Loudonhill, scandalize Balfour of Burley himself by the disunion implied in their virulent strife of tongues; and for a moment his interposition is availing. But although the two divines were thus for the time silenced, they continued to eye each other like two dogs who, having been separated by the authority of their masters while fighting, have retreated, as Sir Walter describes it (and he was cunning in canine characteristics), each beneath the chair of his owner, still watching each other's motions, and indicating by occasional growls, by the erected

bristles of the back and ears, and by the red glance of the eye, that their discord is unappeased, and that they only wait the first opportunity afforded by any general movement or commotion in the company, to fly once more each at the other's throat.



## XXI.

*THE CONTINUAL DROPPING OF A CONTENTIOUS WIFE.*

PROVERBS xix. 13 ; xxvii. 15.

FAR above rubies is the price set, in the words of King Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him, upon the true womanly wife who openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in whose tongue is the law of kindness. But in the proverbs of Solomon it is written that the contentions of a wife are a continual dropping ; and again, that a continual dropping in a very rainy day, and a contentious woman, are alike. With such a wife, to adopt Bishop Patrick's paraphrase, "a man is no more able to live at home, than to dwell in a rotten and ruinous house, through the roof of which the rain drops perpetually." There is a worse thing even than wretchedness in

"—the dead unhappy night, and when the rain is on the roof," and that is, when the rain comes through.

Xantippe, as M. St. Marc Girardin takes it, was not the only vixenish, shrewish, cross-grained, *acariâtre* woman of antiquity ; but her violence, as associated with the serene wisdom of her husband, made a name for her that will be long-lived as his. She is the established type of the contentious woman. Nor was she much less of a torment to her son than to her husband. Socrates, however, putting up patiently with



the whims and caprices of his wife, enforced upon Lamprocles the duty of bearing with respect the irritating outbreaks of his mother. Seasoned toppers have a less sentimental way of regarding the sage :

“ Socrate, cet homme discret  
Que toute la terre révère,  
Allait manger au cabaret  
Quand sa femme était en colère.”

Petruchio is nothing daunted by Hortensio's report of Katharine as “intolerably curst, and shrewd, and froward ; so beyond all measure, that,” adds the reporter, “were my state far worser than it is, I would not wed her for a mine of gold.” Petruchio will woo and wed her off-hand, were she

“ — as curst and shrewd  
As Socrates' Xantippe, or a worse ;  
. . . were she as rough  
As are the swelling Adriatic seas.”

Of shrewish Xantippe it has been shrewdly said, that had she been married to a small tradesman of Athens, she would most likely never have risen above the rank of a mere ill-tempered woman ;—but to have an eminent popular lecturer to badger—a man who was one of the foremost figures of the day, whose *carte de visite*, so to speak, might be seen in every window—this was a chance too good to be neglected by a genuine sports-woman ; and she seized it, and won herself a deathless name, in Dr. Lempriere's Dictionary, as the most accomplished Tartar of ancient times.

In illustration of the fact that a number of good old-fashioned words, those pictorial and uncompromising epithets in which our forefathers delighted, have gone out of use, and been replaced by polite paraphrases which avoid nothing so much as calling things by their right names, the remark has been made, that we have no shrews or scolds now, but sensitive temperaments and

nervous organizations, irritable natures and difficult tempers. "Of shrews and scolds we have as little as of the ducking-stool which was their punishment. And yet the class survives, though its name and award have both passed away." Such a young person as "Katharine the curst" could not, indeed, exist for a moment in any modern drawingroom; but for all its softer manifestation, humanity is not yet purged of its evil humour of shrewishness. It is shown to have been the lot of many great men besides Socrates to have had the same ill-luck in their matrimonial ventures, and to have drawn a vixen when they put in for a wife. We are referred to Albert Dürer as having drawn such a questionable prize, Milton another. Luther is held by some to have been deservedly punished for marrying at all, by finding in his Catherine a needle-tongued shrew, whose small-beer chroniclings and persistent prate vexed his righteous soul amid his theological meditations, and broke the peace of his *sanctum* with the din and babble of womanhood when it will not be stilled, like waves that cannot rest. That to Richard Hooker the happiness of Heaven should seem to consist primarily in Order, as indeed in all human societies this is the first thing needful, has been suggestively accounted for, not only because he had been employed in contending against a public spirit of disorder and insubordination, but because his life had been passed under the perpetual discomfort of domestic discord. Of his wife Joan, Izaak Walton says that she brought him neither beauty nor portion; and "for her conditions, they were too like that wife's, which is by Solomon compared to a dripping house: so that he had no reason to 'rejoice in the wife of his youth,' but rather to say with the holy prophet, 'Woe is me, that I am constrained to have my habitation in the tents of Kedar!'" If Hooker was a reader of Chaucer, there

haply would often rise to his memory, if not fall from his lips, the regretful words of the Marchaunde, in the prologue to his tale,—

“Were I unbounden . . .  
I wolde never eft come in the snare.  
We weddid men live in sowre and care.”

Hannah More makes a point of weighting in life that “humble, pious, diligent,” and altogether exemplary curate, Mr. Jackson, in *Celebs*, with a partner who is the reverse of a help-meet. For, “this valuable man, who was about as good a judge of the world as the great Hooker, made just as indiscreet a marriage.” The patient, retiring and retired Clutterbuck in *Pelham*, is another instance in point: the reverend scholar owns for wife “a small woman with a sharp pointed nose, small, cold, grey eyes, and a complexion high towards the cheek-bones, but waxing of a light green before it reached the wide and querulous mouth.” How wretched that contentious woman can make that unresisting man, is set forth in a chapter which readers of Lord Lytton’s first fiction of real mark will scarcely have forgotten. The Vicar of Shipley Magna, again, in *Veronica*, is weighted in life with a fretful and slatternly *conjux*, who “turned out to have a shrewish tongue, and to be energetic in the using of it,” and whose vulgar family established themselves in the vicarage and lorded it over the vicar as only the callousness of vulgarity can.

“Est mala crux, conjux mala; crux tamen illa ferenda est  
Quâ nemo nisi Mors te relevare potest.”

The Italian historian of “All Heresies,” dedicated by him (Domenico Bernino) to Pope Clement XI., quotes the warning instance of Tertullian throwing himself into the troubled sea of matrimony, and no sooner taking a wife, than, being made wise by suffering, he composed his laborious treatise *De Molestiis Nuptiarum*,

finding in that employment the only relief from those continual miseries which, testifies Bernino himself, "we who now write can bear witness to faithfully" and feelingly. Burton cites the case of Bartholomæus Scheræus, "that famous Poet Laureate" and Professor of Hebrew at Wittenberg, who said in the introduction to a work of his upon the Psalms, that he should have finished it long before, but amongst many miseries which almost broke his back—*quæ misero mihi pene tergum fregerunt*—he was yoked to a worse than Xantippe. The surmise has been ventured of it being perhaps part of the moral training of a certain kind of hero, that he should have a shrewish wife, on the principle of the grace which comes by tribulation, and the nobleness to be got at only under the pressure of daily chastisement: anyway, great men have often married themselves to shrewish wives, and curst tempers have been mated with patient ones more frequently than happily. Those who define and distinguish are quick to tell us that a shrew is by no means a virago, that although she may be a vixen, she is seldom ferocious, her pleasure being to scold, not to strike. The house over which a shrew presides is notoriously a weariness to the souls of those forced to dwell therein. "She is for ever scolding the servants when she is not changing them; and servants never do well when they are scolded." The same kind of thing goes on with her children; and as to her husband,—“Poor shrew! that proverb about the dinner of herbs and the stalled ox has never carried any weight with her or taught her any lesson.” John Bunyan would have women, “whenever they would perk and lord it over their husbands,” to remember that “both by creation and transgression they are made to be in subjection to them.” Such a thing, he admits, *may* happen, as that the woman, not the man, may be in the right,—“I mean when both are



godly,—but ordinarily it is otherwise,” he sees no reason to doubt. John Wesley’s wife so tormented her husband by her outrageous jealousy and abominable temper, that Southey accounts her worthy to be classed in a triad with Xantippe and the wife of Job, as one of the three bad wives.\* Wesley, indeed, is shown to have been neither so submissive as Socrates nor so patient as the man of Uz. She “sometimes laid violent hands upon him, and tore his hair.” But he knew that he was by nature the stronger vessel, of the more worthy gender, and lord and master by law: and that the words ‘honour and obey’ were in the bond. And he stickled for the bond. Like Shylock, he would have his bond. Neither eminence in piety, nor eminence in philosophy, nor eminence in pugilism, avails to save a man from this sort of vexation; for, as regards the last of the three, a late Champion of England was, according to the police reports, a fellow-sufferer with Socrates and with Wesley.

“Be merry, be merry, my wife’s as all;  
For women are shrews, both short and tall,”

quavers Justice Silence over Justice Shallow’s pippins and cheese and wine. When Leontes cannot stop the mouth of the wife of his counsellor Antigonus—a “callet,” or scold, he terms her, “of boundless tongue, who late hath beat her husband, and now baits me”—the king at last tells the counsellor he is worthy to be hanged, that will not stay her tongue. Antigonus bluffly replies,—

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\* But it is Southey himself who, as *The Doctor*, propounds an apology for Job’s wife as a maligned or misunderstood woman, *femme incomprise*; and himself says of himself, that “as Dr. Southey has classed this injured Matriarch in a triad with Xantippe and Mrs. Wesley,” he cannot but hope that the “candid and learned Laureate” will render her justice, and in the next edition of his *Life of Wesley* substitute Hooker’s wife in her place.

“—— Hang all the husbands  
That cannot do that feat, you'll leave yourself  
Hardly one subject.”

The shrew as painted by the old masters, as in their day of the highest classes, is said to be found now only among the people, where indeed she is not infrequent—that shrill-voiced, ferret-eyed, sharp-nosed little woman who stands with her arms akimbo, and scolds at all creation. But beyond this “primitive type of the shrew” we confessedly have enough and to spare of a more refined kind among the educated; good women even, who are content to stay at home and look after their house and children, but who “take out in ill-humour what they deny to naughtiness.” And the odd part of the business is held to be, that most shrews are unconscious of deserving blame: the woman who rails and fumes at every trifling annoyance that occurs, till she makes the whole house miserable, does not know that she is committing a sin. “She does not dream that she is digging the grave of her own happiness and esteem; but, after she has worried her family to the very verge of madness, laments her hard case in not being loved—she who would do so much for them!” And so she would in all probability, her censors freely admit; for nine times out of ten it is her temper, not her heart, that is in fault; and the most uncomfortable shrew is often found capable of the most heroic virtue when the pinch comes. Many a shrew is said to have broken her heart before now for what seems to be the ingratitude and coldness of those whom her own temper only drove from her. Her children either leave home prematurely or marry ill: they neither see nor care for the real love and sterling goodness often underlying that bitter temper: all they know is, “that mamma is always cross and that she makes their lives wretched.” As for

her husband, she is "of so much use by her perpetual nagging that she saves the necessity of purgatory after death by giving him the full benefit of it beforehand." In Mr. Chauncy Hare Townshend's allegory,—

"Ill-nature had a heart susceptible,  
And all the world behaved so wickedly  
To her, that if she made her home a hell,  
'Twas not her fault, and only what should be."

What some women pride themselves in, and call a high spirit, Hartley Coleridge declares to be only strong against the weak, cruel to the kind, and utterly unavailing when its use becomes justifiable. It is only, he affirms, in duty, affection, piety, that woman can or ought to be strong: her power is in her weakness. Sir Arthur Helps moralizes on the numerous instances of severe tyranny which every observant man of the world must have seen exercised by "weak" women—which tyranny has been established, continued, and endured solely by reason of the weakness, real or supposed, of the persons exercising it. George Eliot's Mrs. Glegg is a truly representative woman when she quarrels with her husband because of his compassionate temper, and shuts herself up in her own room with Baxter's *Saints' Rest* from morning till night, denying herself to all visitors. The affected resort to religion by certain soured and shallow souls feminine, "of the baser sort," who do it to annoy, and are pious out of spite, and claim the privilege of superior sanctity to make home unpleasant to the family in general and to the husband in particular, has often been the theme of satire in fiction. Smollett relates of Mrs. Trunnion, that "the first respite from her chagrin was employed in the strict discharge of what are called the duties of religion, which she performed with the most rancorous severity, setting on foot a persecution in her own family that harassed the commodore

himself out of all patience," and made the house too hot for every one else. Years later we are told of the effective discipline of the same lady, who "by the force of pride, religion, and cognac, had erected a most terrible tyranny in the house." Mrs. Berry is one of those "Men's Wives" sketched by Titmarsh, whose tactics are significant; as where, at supper-time, "she gave a martyred look, and left the room; and while we partook of the very unnecessary repast, was good enough to sing some hymn tunes to an exceedingly slow movement in the next room, intimating that she was awake, and that, though suffering, she found her consolations in religion," such as, to her taste and in her temper, it might be. Mrs. Furnival, in *Orley Farm*, is proposed as a model of the female married victim who ever makes the very most of such positive wrongs as Providence may vouchsafe her. But pre-eminent in her kind, this kind, is the Mrs. Varney of Dickens. She is most devout when most ill-tempered. Whenever she and her husband are at unusual variance, the *Protestant Manual* is her constant companion. She is seldom very Protestant at meals, unless it happens that they are underdone, or over-done, or indeed that anything occurs to put her out of humour. Then again there is Mrs Wilfer, on principle "in a sombre darkling state," with "lurid indications" of storm visible athwart the awful gloom of her composure; and the Mrs. Fielding of a much earlier story, whose "Now carry me to the grave," uttered in absolute health, would lapse in a state of dreadful calmness, and that in a bitterly sarcastic mood, she being a nobody, whom nobody ought to trouble themselves about, and so forth, *usque ad nauseam, necnon ultra*. As Gresset's Geronte is driven to protest,—

"Oh ! parbleu ! tout ceci commence à m'ennuyer :  
Je suis las des humeurs qu'il me faut essayer ;



Comment ! on ne peut plus être un seul jour tranquille !  
 Je vois bien qu'elle boude, et je connais son style ;  
 Eh bien ! moi, les boudeurs sont mon aversion,  
 Et je n'en veux jamais souffrir dans ma maison.

\* \* \* \* \*

Cela m'excède enfin. Je veux que tout le monde  
 Se porte bien chez moi, que personne n'y gronde."

The *Je veux* may be a *Sic volo, sic jubeo* ; but where there is a woman's will the other way, the master of the house is not quite sure of the mastery.

Swift contrasts, not compares, a cloudy sky with a cloudy-tempered wife :—

"The bolt discharged, the sky grows clear ;  
 But every sublunary dowdy,  
 The more she scolds, the more she's cloudy.

\* \* \* \* \*

You know a cloudy sky bespeaks  
 Fair weather when the morning breaks ;  
 But women in a cloudy plight  
 Foretell a storm to last till night."

A clerical essayist avows his conviction that many able, sensitive men have never had a fair chance in life, their powers having been crippled, their views embittered, their whole nature soured, by what he calls "a constant discipline of petty whips and scourges, and little pricking needles, applied (in some cases through pure stolidity and coarseness of nature) by an ill-mated wife ;" so that it is only by flying from their own fireside that they can escape the unceasing gadfly, with its petty, irritating, never-ending sting. Not even the strongest and most violent man, says Jean Paul Richter, can hold out in the long run against the eternal pouting and fractiousness of a woman. The author of a tractate on Man and his Master, says of "nagging," that no form of torture which has yet been invented,\* save perhaps the

\* Bridget Duster, in *Punch's Complete Letter Writer*, can't bear a mistress that's always nagging and nagging. A good noise once

slow dropping of water on some highly sensitive part of the frame, can afford a parallel to this ingenious application of the principle of penitence. "The absolute certainty that, when snub, or scolding, or refusal have died into silence, the word will be said over again ; the certainty that it will be said year after year, month after month, week after week ; the irritation of expecting it, the irritation of hearing it, the irritation of expecting it again, tell on the firmest will in the world." Only souls feminine are up to the mark in the matter of such iterations,—

"Which to pursue, were but a feminine humour,  
And far beneath the dignity of man,"

as Ben Jonson has it in the *Poetaster*. The Abbess in Shakspeare's *Comedy of Errors* approves in the abstract of Adriana's reprehending her faulty husband ; but when she comes to particulars, and learns the lady's *modus operandi*, she can at once account for the husband going out of his mind : in public as well as private, Adriana lectured, upbraided, reprehended Antipholus, in bed and at board :—

"In bed, he slept not for my urging it ;  
At board, he fed not for my urging it ;  
Alone, it was the subject of my theme ;  
In company, I often glanced at it ;  
Still did I tell him it was vile and bad.

*Abbess.* And thereof came it, that the man was mad."

The continual "dropping" of the text is written "dripping" by some old divines. That reminds us of Sheridan's comment on the "drip, drip," of the lines in Coleridge's *Remorse*. "Drip—drip—drip ?—Why, here's nothing but dripping."

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in a way she don't mind—it brisks up one's blood ; but she has known mistresses always pushing their words at you and about you, as if they were sticking pins in a cushion with no flesh and blood.

## XXII.

## THE DIVINITY THAT SHAPES OUR ENDS.

PROVERBS xx. 24.

THE divine controls the human in its outgoings and the issue of them all. "Man's goings are of the Lord; how can a man then understand his own way?" There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof is death. There's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will. "There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless, the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand." Chance gets the credit of the controlling influence, in the Greek proverb, *Ταυτόματον ἡμῶν καλλίῳ βουλεύεται*. But Hamlet reads the matter better when he affirms, in a passage from which the pith has already been extracted, but of which the whole context is pregnant and pithy enough to bear repetition, that—

"Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well  
When our deep plots do pall; and that should teach us  
There's a divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough-hew them how we will."

The out-come of the roughest of rough-hewing is shapely, after all; for the Hand of God has been working in and by the hand of man, and a Divine Artist has ordered the workmanship of the human artisan.

It is well seen and said, that no doubt every life is full of mistakes; and the rare possibility of finding in our own case which of them has told lastingly against us, is urged as an argument against morbidly dwelling upon them; for, going by analogy—observing what sort of mistakes press and gnaw on the minds of others—our

own sensitiveness is proved to be a far from infallible judge. "We may then be attaching mighty consequences to some indiscretion which has really served us well, while the mistake which has damaged us may lurk altogether out of our cognizance." Who, as Dr. Rowland Williams asks, has not known impulse saving those whom deliberation before temptation would have ruined; and accident, or one of those tokens of Providence which seem accidental, opening a path which calculation could not have devised? Butler's couplet is pointed and pertinent:—

"Some people's fortunes, like a weft or stray,  
Are only gained by losing of their way."

Campbell, on the other hand, reflects "how oft the wisest, on misfortune's shelves are wrecked by errors most unlike themselves." Addison reflects how very often it happens that prudence, which has always in it a great mixture of caution, hinders a man from being so fortunate as he might possibly have been without it. "A person who only aims at what is likely to succeed, and follows closely the dictates of human prudence, never meets with those great and unforeseen successes, which are often the effect of a sanguine temper or a more happy rashness." This is indeed but a paraphrase of the Shakspearean doctrine that our indiscretion sometimes serves us well. The moral attached to La Fontaine's fable of the two adventurers and the talisman, is in scope, if not in terms, equivalent:—

"Fortune aveugle suit aveugle hardiesse.  
Le sage quelquefois fait bien d'exécuter  
Avant que de donner le temps à la sagesse  
D'envisager le fait, et sans la consulter."

That was in every sense a lucky hit which Protogenes the painter made, when painting the dog whose foaming at the mouth was so much admired. Pliny tells us how



long the artist essayed in vain to please himself in representing this foam, till at last, disheartened by repeated failures, he flung his sponge at the mouth of the dog, and this fling accidentally produced the very effect desiderated and desired. Another story elsewhere told by Pliny, is that of Jason of Pheræ, who, being given over by the physicians on account of a desperate imposthume in his breast, and having a mind to rid himself of his pain, by death at least, in a battle flung himself into the very thickest of the fight, and was so fortunately wounded quite through the body, that the imposthume broke, and he was perfectly cured. Valerius Maximus rather heightens the miraculous tone of the narrative, in his version of it, for he makes out Jason to have received this friendly wound from an assassin. Montaigne seems to have had both of Pliny's stories in indirect remembrance when, in one of his essays, he argues that fortune has a great share in physic, as in several other more certain arts; and adds, that in painting, there will sometimes slip from the hand of the artist touches so far surpassing both his fancy and his art, as to excite his own admiration and astonishment. "*Le hasard a mieux fait que nous tous, ma petite,*" Figaro assures Suzanne in Beaumarchais: "*Ainsi va le monde; on travaille, on projette, on arrange d'un côté; la fortune l'accomplit d'un autre.*" There is uncertainty in wisdom, as well as in folly, muses Owen Feltham, of the *Resolves*; so often happens it that when a man plots to save himself, his plotting ends in his ruin, and that his own wit brings him into those snares which above all things he would shun. "What we suspect and would avoid, we cannot; what we suspect not, we fall into." We use means of preservation, and they prove means of perdition. We take courses that imply ruin, and they prove in the sequel our security. It is in vain,

philosophizes M. de Wolmar, that we essay to give to things human a solidity which is not in the nature of them : reason itself is for leaving many things to chance. Lewis the Fourteenth had said much the same thing long before, in one of those *maximes royales* in virtue of which a great French critic recognizes in the Grand Monarque a veritable man of talent in the difficult art of reigning. Wisdom itself enjoins, his Majesty says, that in certain situations much should be left to chance ; reason itself then prompts acquiescence in those nondescript movements, or blind instincts, which are above reason, and which seem to come from heaven. The Princess Orsini was of the same opinion. Too many wise people, she submits, or at least wise in their own conceit, take themselves to be most wise when they run no risk, and leave nothing to chance. *She* was persuaded of the expediency of sometimes *laisser les choses au hasard*, provided the *laisser-aller* be not pushed to the verge, or over it, of temerity and foolhardiness, such as figures properly nowhere but in romance. Froissart's reflection is admired as *assez piquante*, in its way, which is his way : "Ainsi adviennent souvent les fortunes en armes et en amours, plus heureuses et plus merveilleuses qu'on ne les pourroit ni oseroit penser et souhaiter." Hazlitt made it a specially characteristic charge against Mr. Pitt, that, in defending his political conduct, he never seemed to consider himself at all responsible for the success of his measures, or to suppose that future events were in our own power ; but that, as the best-laid schemes might fail, and there was no providing against all possible contingencies, this was a sufficient excuse for our plunging at once into any dangerous or absurd enterprise without the least regard to consequences.

Goethe said of his *Wilhelm Meister* to Eckermann, that the whole work seems to describe man as being,

despite all his follies and errors, led by a higher hand, and reaching some happy goal at last. To a very different work of fiction, in our own language, the objection has been offered, that if the most trivial arrangement for the future is made in one chapter, we know beforehand that it will certainly be upset, by circumstances over which nobody has any control, in the next; which surely is, however unintentionally, giving a "strangely mean and unworthy interpretation of Divine Providence," and an interpretation, moreover, which all experience, the objector urges, very emphatically contradicts:—practically, we know that the least independent of mortals has a large amount of free-will for good or evil: we form our plans, and, generally speaking, we are permitted to execute them: our deeds are our own, though their consequences, it is true, are in other hands. A divinity shapes our ends, but the power of at least rough-hewing them abides with man. Goethe had very much to write about controlling destiny in the *Wahlverwandtschaften*, where "that strange Mittler" is copious on the topic of man playing blind-man's-buff. "The most prudent plans I have seen miscarry, and the most foolish succeed." While life is sweeping us forwards, muses another of the characters, we fancy that we are acting out our own impulses—but discover the mistake later. How often are we not turned aside from some point in life's journey we were bent on reaching, but only to reach some higher stage! The traveller, to his great annoyance, breaks a wheel on the road, and through this vexatious delay makes some charming acquaintance, and forms some new connection, which has an influence on all his life. "Destiny grants us our wishes, but in its own way," says Goethe, "in order to give us something beyond our wishes." He was the man to find a fund of reflection in what Sir Andrew

Michael related of Frederick the Great after the battle of Lignitz ; when the king, after making "some excellent reflections on the imperfection of human foresight," declared himself to have laboured to no purpose to bring about the very event which had now, by other means, been accomplished. One is reminded of Goethe's Mittler again, when he, on one occasion, thanks God that "the thing cures itself," after all his talking and trying had proved fruitless.

Arthur H. Clough, in *Dipsychus*, utters the exclamation, "Oh, it is great—

"To do and know not what. The dashing stream  
Stays not to pick his steps among the rocks ;  
And though the hunter looks before he leap,  
'Tis instinct rather than a shaped-out thought  
That lifts him his bold way."

It is the expressed conviction of the same author, in one of his prose essays, that very many are they who, looking back into their past lives, feel most thankful for those acts which came least from their own mere natural volition—can see that what did them most good was what they themselves would least have chosen ; that things, in fact, which they were forced to, were, after all, the best things that ever happened to them. Many, he is sure, have had reason to bless a wholesome compulsion ; and the mature free-will of the grown man looks back, if with some little regret, with as certainly no little scorn, upon the bygone "puerile spontaneities" of the time when he did as he liked. Did a man, as Mr. Carlyle muses, foresee his life, and not merely hope it, and grope it, and so, by necessity and free-will, make and fabricate it into a reality, he were no man, but some other kind of creature, superhuman or subterhuman. From the quite dim uncertain mass of the future, which lies there, in the words of the Scottish humorist, "un-



combed, uncarded, like a mass of 'tarry wool' proverbially 'ill to spin,' man has to, and does, spin out, better or worse, his "rumply, infirm thread of existence, and wind it up, up,—till the spool is full." Elsewhere our philosopher reflects with admiration, in one of his critical biographies, how cunningly thrifty is destiny, quietly shaping her tools for the work they are to do, while she seems but spoiling and breaking them. In another he speculates on the drift of "happy accidents"—conjectures, for instance, whether, had not want, discomfort and distress-warrants been busy at Stratford-on-Avon, Shakspeare himself had not lived killing calves or combing wool. Whether, again, had the Edial boarding-school turned out well, we should ever have so much as heard of Samuel Johnson, who in that case had been a fat schoolmaster and gerund-grinder, and never known that he was more. "Some veiled Power," as Cræsus in the poem words it,

"Walks in our midst, and moves us to strange ends,  
Our wills are Heaven's, and we what Heaven intends."

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### XXIII.

#### *THE BONDAGE THAT COMES OF BORROWING.*

PROVERBS xxii. 7.

THE borrower, says the Wise King, is servant, or bondman, to the lender, or, as it is in the margin, the man that lendeth. He is in bonds to him; is under his thumb; can scarcely call his soul and body his own. The loan is a dead weight upon the powers of the borrower until it is discharged; to borrow is to burden oneself with a load in life that may weigh down life, and last for life, and perhaps wear out life, and outlive life.

Debts turn freemen into slaves, says the Greek proverb:

“Τὰ δάνεια δούλους τοὺς ἐλευθέρους ποιεῖ.” It was the subtle policy of Eumenes to borrow large sums of those grandees who hated him most, in order to secure their confidence, or at any rate to make them give up their designs upon his life, out of regard to the money lent him. Here, by a practical paradox, the lenders were made the humble servants of the borrower. Another and more direct inversion of the law, or perversion of the principle, is curtly enunciated in Pistol’s maxim, “Base is the slave who pays.” Mr. Lister gives us a typical man in that Beauchamp whom he designates one of those ingenious persons who, without means, contrive to indulge in every imaginable luxury, deny themselves no gratification, and habitually set expense at nought ; who are always deep in debt, yet never seem to feel its consequences ; who stake on a race more pounds than they are known to have pence, and play every night for double their yearly income, and see it lost with the coolest indifference. The human species is composed, according to Elia’s theory, of the men who borrow and the men who lend ; and the latter are born degraded. “He shall serve his brethren.” What a careless, even deportment hath your borrower ! the admiring essayist exclaims ; “what rosy gills ! what a beautiful reliance on Providence doth he manifest,—taking no more thought than lilies ! What contempt for money,—accounting it (yours and mine especially) no better than dross ! What a liberal confounding of those pedantic distinctions of *meum* and *tuum* !” Elia deems him to be the true taxpayer who “callethe all the world up to be taxed ;” and his exactions, too, have such a cheerful, voluntary air, so far removed from your sour parochial or state-gatherers, “those ink-born varlets, who carry their want of welcome in their faces,” whereas *he* cometh to you with a smile, and troubleth you with no receipt ;

confining himself to no set season : every day is his Candlemas, or his Feast of Holy Michael. "He is the true Propontis which never ebbeth, the sea which taketh handsomely at each man's hand. In vain the victim whom he delighteth to honour struggles with destiny, he is in the net." Hazlitt says of some bold beggars or borrowers, that it is their facility in borrowing that has ruined them ; for who will set heartily to work, who has the face to ask a comparative stranger for a considerable loan, on some plausible and pompous pretext, and walk off with it in his pocket ? You might as well, he says, suspect a highwayman of addicting himself to hard study in the intervals of his profession. Why express surprise at their having run so largely in debt, while others continue to lend ? And how is this to be helped, when the manner of these sturdy beggars amounts to dragging you out of your money ? "If a person has no delicacy, he has you in his power, for you necessarily feel some towards him," and since he will take no denial, compliance with his peremptory demands follows of course. Some there are to whom debt seems their natural element, and who, as Jerrold phrases it, appear to swim only in hot water. "To owe and to live are, to them, terms synonymous ; the ledger is their *libro d'oro* ; the call of the sheriff no more than the call of a friend." Mr. Trollope describes the habitual debtor as going jauntily along and with elastic step, almost enjoying the excitement of his embarrassments. There is his Mr. Sowerby in *Framley Parsonage* : who ever saw a cloud on his brow ? It made one almost in love with ruin to be in his company. And his author takes note of it as a remarkable thing with reference to men who, like him, are distressed for money, that they never seem at a loss for small sums, or deny themselves those luxuries which small sums purchase : cabs, dinners, wine, theatres, and

new gloves are always at the command of men who are drowned in pecuniary embarrassments, whereas those who don't owe a shilling are so often obliged to go without them. "It would seem that there is no gratification so costly as that of keeping out of debt. But then it is only fair that, if a man has a hobby, he should pay for it." Lord Alvanley's description of a man who muddled away his fortune in paying his tradesmen's bills is almost equalled, perhaps surpassed, by the "Tout devoir, c'est tout avoir" of Balzac's Des Lupeaulx: "Les dettes! Il n'y a pas d'homme fort sans dettes! Les dettes représentent des besoins satisfaits," etc. Did his debt-difficulties affect Rawdon Crawley's good spirits? No, protests the author of *Vanity Fair*; every denizen of which region must have remarked how well those live who are comfortably and thoroughly in debt; how they deny themselves nothing; how jolly and easy they are in their minds. Captain Bellfield in a later story drives his creditor, Mr. Cheesacre, into paroxysms of suppressed anger at the picnic, by giving directions, and by having these directions obeyed: a man to whom he had lent twenty pounds the day before yesterday, and who had not contributed so much as a bottle of champagne! "One would think he had given it himself—the music and the wine and all the rest of it. There are some people full of that kind of impudence. How they manage to carry it on without ever paying a shilling, I never could tell. I know I have to pay my way, and something over and beyond generally." For there are some people, Elia's division of born lenders, meek and mild to a fault, as this world goes, who resemble the diffident man in Alexander Smith's household story, who used to be afraid to face his debtor—afraid lest he should think, if they met in the street, "Here comes that fellow Hagart, with his bill in his face,"—and so,



to avoid him, this soft-hearted creditor dodged about circuitous routes: "If I saw my man coming, I bolted down the next street, or plunged into an opportune entry, or fairly turned on my heel and fled. He was the only debtor I ever had, and I was afraid of him. Creditors don't usually act in that manner—at all events none of *my* creditors ever did. Of course I never got the money." Even in Ben Jonson's days the fashionable doctrine was, "Debt! why that 's the more for your credit; it 's an excellent policy to owe much in these days." The explanation of this good policy given by Cordatus in *Every Man out of his Humour* comprises this particular,—that where you are indebted any great sum, your creditor observes you with no less regard than if he were bound to you for some huge benefit, and will quake to give you the least cause of offence, lest he lose his money. "I assure you, in these times, no man has his servant more obsequious and pliant than gentlemen their creditors." This is a paradox, of course; but therein lies the point of it.

Even the friendliest of Clarendon's apologists are fain to own the depth of his culpability in sanctioning the degradation of Charles II. into a dependent borrower from Louis XIV. Was it not binding himself over to keep the peace? A bondman's is bated breath. What surprised the simple-hearted Vicar of Wakefield most in that unaccountable Mr. Burchell was, that although he was a money-borrower he defended his opinions in their philosophical disputes with as much obstinacy as if, quoth Doctor Primrose, "he had been my patron." Is not the borrower the servant of the lender,—his slave, his bondman? He who repairs to a tyrant becomes his slave, though he set out a freeman, as Pompey said in taking leave of his friends, apparently citing the lines from Sophocles:

ὅστις γὰρ ὡς τύραννον ἐμπορεύεται  
κείνου 'στι δούλος καὶν ἐλεύθερος μόλη.

Be sure of it, says Punch's Complete Letter Writer, "the debtor, let him hold up his head and ruffle it as he will, is the bondman—the serf of the creditor." Is there a worse slavery than debt, asks honest Gunn, in *Retired from Business*:—"galling, hopeless debt? If my bones are free, my spirit 's bound. If this hand 's unchained, my soul 's in thralldom." And he murmurs over a certain bond as he unfolds it, "What an innocent piece of parchment seemed this when I signed it! and now, to my fancy, it looks like the foul skin of a cannibal that has eaten man for twenty years." The man out of debt, though with a flaw in his jerkin, a crack in his shoe-leather, and a hole in his hat, is still the son of liberty free as the singing-lark above him; but "the debtor, though clothed in the utmost bravery, what is he but a serf set out upon a holiday, a slave to be reclaimed at any instant by his owner, the creditor?" Richardson's Lovelace vows that nothing more effectually brings down a proud spirit than a sense of lying under pecuniary obligations. "To be prated to by a bumpkin with his hat on, and his arms folded, . . . and you forced to take his arch leers and stupid gibes, . . . I, who think I have a right to break every man's head I pass by, if I like not his looks, to bear this!" Thackeray's F. Bayham holds out himself, as well as the Reverend Charles Honeyman, as an incarnate caution to that "dear youth," Clive Newcome, against the distresses (real as well as technical) that come of debt: "Take warning by him, dear youth! By him and by me, if you like. See me—me, F. Bayham, descended from the ancient kings that long the Tuscan sceptre swayed, dodge down a street to get out of sight of a boot shop, and my colossal frame tremble if a chap puts his hand

on my shoulder, as you did, Pendennis, the other day in the Strand, when I thought a straw might have knocked me down." Lord Lytton's urgent counsel, emphasized with all the force of small capitals, is to nurse, cherish, never cavil away, the "wholesome horror of DEBT." Personal liberty being the paramount essential to human dignity and human happiness, man hazards, he affirms, the condition, and loses the virtues, of freedom, in proportion as he accustoms his thoughts to view, without anguish and shame, his lapse into the bondage of debtor. "Debt is to man what the serpent is to the bird; its eye fascinates, its breath poisons, its coil crushes sinew and bone, its jaw is the pitiless grave." "Night and day, to the ear of a debtor, steal whispers that prompt to the deeds of a felon." Hazlitt's essay on the Want of Money is graphic about the misery of expecting the dun's tap at the door,—the uneasy sense of shame at the approach of your tormentor,—the ignominy of real and sham excuses,—the submission to impertinence, the disingenuousness you practise on him and on yourself, the degradation in the eyes of others and your own. "Oh, it is wretched to have to confront a just and oft-repeated demand, and to be without the means to satisfy it, . . . to be placed at the power of another, to be indebted to his lenity, to stand convicted of having played the knave or the fool, and to have no way left to escape contempt but by incurring pity." Never exceed thy income,—the voice of George Herbert reaches us from the Church-Porch :

"By no means run in debt : take thine own measure ;  
 Who cannot live on twenty pound a year  
 Cannot on forty ; he's a man of pleasure,  
 A kind of thing that's for itself too dear."

*Ma foi, monsieur*, Molière's *La Flèche* tells Cléante, *ceux qui empruntent sont bien malheureux ; et il faut essayer*

*d'étranges choses* when one is reduced, like that young gentleman, to parley with the money-lenders. Mr. Brown the elder assures his nephew and namesake, "Ah, Bob, it's hard times with a gentleman, when he has to walk round a street for fear of meeting a creditor there, and for a man of courage, when he can't look a tailor in the face." Bitterly Balzac complains in one place that "*il faut saluer nos créanciers, les saluer avec grâce ;*" and in another he piles up the agony of hearing the bell rung, when the creditor has the handling of it : "*Oui, pour un homme généreux, une dette est l'enfer . . . Une dette impayée est la bassesse, un commencement de friponnerie, et pis que tout cela, un mensonge ! elle ébauche des crimes,*" etc. The original of Byron's Werner, Miss Lee's Kruitznor,—in a tale, by some good judges (De Quincey for one) accounted superior to the play founded upon it,—on finding himself a debtor, became suddenly alive to a new and undefined misery, of which, amid all his calamities, he had hitherto been ignorant : "Impoverished indeed, but no man's slave, for he was then no man's debtor ; personal insult or degradation, in any personal shape, he had never yet known." Mr. Trollope is realistic enough on the misery of waiting in dingy rooms, which look on to bare walls, "in the City," and are approached through some Hook Court ; or of keeping appointments at a low coffee-house, to which trystings the money-lender will not trouble himself to come unless it pleases him ; of being civil, almost suppliant, to a cunning knave whom the borrower loathes ; of submitting to vulgarity of the foulest kind, and having to seem to like it ; of being badgered, reviled, and at last accused of want of honesty by the most fraudulent of mankind. Wise and weighty were those words addressed by Johnson to Boswell by letter : "Do not accustom yourself to consider debt only



as an inconvenience ; you will find it a calamity." This was just before Boswell lost his father, Lord Auchinleck ; and just after the loss, we find the new laird again cautioned and counselled by the old sage, who exhorts him not to think his estate his own, while any man can call upon him for money which he cannot pay : let him therefore begin with even "timorous parsimony ;" and let it be his first care not to be in any man's debt. The borrower is the bondman of the lender. Colonel Newcome bids his boy mark the degradation through debt of their reverend friend, the popular incumbent of Lady Whittlesea's ; let him note to what straits debt brings a man,—to tamper with truth, to have to cheat the poor. "Think of flying before a washerwoman, or humbling yourself to a tailor, or eating a poor man's children's bread !" Sir Henry Taylor asserts that nothing breaks down a man's truthfulness more surely than pecuniary embarrassment,—

"An unthrift was a liar from all time ;  
Never was debtor that was not deceiver."

Borrowing he calls one of the most ordinary ways in which weak men sacrifice the future to the present, whence it is that the gratitude for a loan is so proverbially evanescent ; for the future, becoming present in its turn, will not be well pleased with those who have assisted in doing it an injury. By conspiring with your friend, as the author of *Notes from Life* puts it, to defraud his future self, you naturally incur his future displeasure. Take to heart, therefore, the admonition of the ancient courtier :—

"Neither a borrower nor a lender be ;  
For loan oft loseth both itself and friend,  
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry."

Mr. Disraeli has said, that if youth but knew the fatal misery they are entailing on themselves the moment

they accept a pecuniary credit to which they are not entitled, "how they would start in their career! how pale they would turn! how they would tremble, and clasp their hands in agony at the precipice on which they are disporting!" He calls debt the prolific mother of folly and of crime,—tainting the course of life in all its dreams. With a small beginning it has a giant's growth and strength; and when we make the monster, Frankenstein-like, we make our master, who haunts us at all hours, and shakes his whip of scorpions for ever in our sight. "The slave hath no overseer so severe. Faustus, when he signed the bond with blood, did not secure a doom more terrific." In the estimate of Dr. Paulus, debt is something so degrading, so harassing, so shackling to the freedom of a man, that he can understand no one obtaining the least thing on credit, necessary or unnecessary, without forfeiting all self-respect and peace of mind. "Dans notre famille," says Léopold Robert, "nous avons tous été élevés avec des principes qui nous font envisager avec la plus grande frayeur de contracter des obligations que tant de circonstances peuvent empêcher de remplir. Nous entendions dire sans cesse qu'il valait mieux vivre de peu, et de très-peu même, que de risquer par une ambition trop grande de se donner des chagrins qui peuvent durer toujours." The narrow notions about debt, held by the old-fashioned Tullivers, may perhaps, as George Eliot ironically apologizes on their behalf, excite a smile on the faces of many readers in these days of wide commercial views and wide philosophy, according to which everything rights itself without any trouble of ours: the fact that my tradesman is out of pocket by me, is to be looked at through the serene certainty that somebody else's tradesman is in pocket by somebody else; and since there must be bad debts in the world, why, it is mere egoism not to like that we in par-

ticular should make them instead of our fellow-creatures. Burns assured a London correspondent in 1783 that above everything he "abhorred as hell" the idea of sneaking in a corner to avoid a dun, and that this made him "a strict economist." Thirteen years later he was an urgent applicant for small loans—his health and strength and spirits quite broken—himself "half distracted" with the impending "horrors of a jail." Rousseau piqued himself in his poverty on this one point of pride: "*Je n'ai jamais su faire de dettes criardes, et j'ai toujours mieux aimé souffrir que devoir.*" So much is falsetto with Jean Jacques that one knows not where to have him; but examples of genuine and consistent dread of debt occur to the memory, in too multiform a medley for present use.

That is a significant entry in John Evelyn's *Diary* of June 19, 1653: "This day I paid all my debts to a farthing. O blessed day!" One of Shenstone's paragraph essays opens with the note of exclamation, "What pleasure it is to pay one's debts!"—and he cites Lyttelton to the same purpose. The pleasure he traces to a removal of that uneasiness which is felt from dependence and obligation; to the gratification of one's social feeling in affording pleasure to the creditor; to the promoting of future confidence; to the consciousness involved of one's own integrity,—and it is a measure we know to be right, both in point of justice and of sound economy. Finally, it is a main support of simple reputation." Gay writes to Swift: "I hate to be in debt, for I cannot bear to pawn £5 worth of my liberty to a tailor or a butcher. I grant you, this is not having the spirit of modern nobility, but it is hard to cure the prejudices of education." Swift recorded of Mrs. Johnson (Stella), at the time of her death, that having been a heedless squanderer until she was two-and-twenty, she then be-

came frightened once for all by the large bills run up with tradesmen who enticed her into their debt; and now beginning to "reflect upon her own folly, she was never at rest until she had discharged all her shop-bills," etc. Some scrupulous souls carry to an extreme their scrupulosity in this respect. Of the late Mr. Welby Pugin we are told, that having once had to endure, in early life, the constraints of a sponging-house, he determined never thenceforth to owe a shilling, and ever afterwards paid his bills weekly, if not upon delivery of the articles; and so inveterate became the habit in after life, that in making excursions from Cambridge with university friends to different churches in the neighbourhood, he would never wait till the close of the day to share expenses, but insisted, often very inconveniently, on paying his proportion of each petty disbursement as it occurred. Those who, and they are many, imagine that Leigh Hunt was indifferent to his pecuniary obligations, are said by his biographer to invert in the most curious manner the real state of the case: "He was so incessantly haunted by them, so over-anxious to fulfil all that was due from him, that he often paralysed his own powers." The Abbé de Bernis is noted as one who, while he never wished or cared to save, "could not bear the idea of debt." Not that we can suppose so comfortable a personage to have ever emulated the life or death of the silent pauper in Crabbe's *Tales of the Hall*:

"The sickening man—for such appeared the fact—  
Just in his need, would not a debt contract;  
But left his poor apartment for the bed  
That earth might yield him, or some wayside shed;  
Here he was found, and to this place conveyed,  
Where he might rest, and his last debt be paid."



## XXIV.

### *AS VINEGAR UPON NITRE.*

PROVERBS xxv. 20.

WHATEVER may be the exact import, chemically speaking, of the simile "As vinegar upon nitre," it is sufficiently suggestive as a comparison of him "that singeth songs to a heavy heart." Corroding acid is the agent in question—a something that sets the teeth on edge, that makes the eyes smart, that makes the heavy heart all the heavier, the sad heart all the sadder. A word in season, how good is it! A song out of season, how bad is it! Light hearts may think to gladden heavy ones with a carol of airy glee, and their warbling may be well-meant; but if the heart they sing to is out of tune, out of tune will sound their daintiest carollings too.

Not only to vinegar upon nitre is he compared that singeth songs to a heavy heart, but also to one that taketh away a garment in cold weather; and of the two similes Coleridge admires the latter, as exquisitely beautiful and touching; while the former, though less pleasing to the imagination, he commends as having the charm of propriety, and expressing the transition with equal force and liveliness. A grief of recent birth he himself compares to a sick infant that must have its medicine administered in its milk, and sad thoughts are the sorrowful heart's natural food. "A man who is full of inward heaviness," says Archbishop Leighton, "the more he is encompassed about with mirth, it exasperates and enrages his grief the more; like ineffectual weak physic, which removes not the humour, but stirs it and

makes it more unquiet." This is a complaint which, as the author of *Aids to Reflection* demonstrates, is not to be cured by opposites, which for the most part only reverse the symptoms while they exasperate the disease. "The soul in her desolation hugs the sorrow close to her, as her sole remaining garment; and this must be drawn off so gradually, and the garment to be put in its stead so gradually slipped on, and feel so like the former, that the sufferer shall be sensible of the change only by the refreshment." The true spirit of consolation, we are admonished, is well content to detain the tear in the eye, and finds a surer pledge of its success in the smile of resignation that dawns through that, than in the liveliest shows of a forced and alien exhilaration.

Shakspeare writes of one deep-drenched in a sea of care,—

"The little birds, that tune their morning's joy,  
Make her moans mad with their sweet melody;  
For mirth doth search the bottom of annoy;  
Sad souls are slain in merry company."

On the banks and braes of bonny Doon the little birds are reproachfully asked how they sing so cheerily to one "sae weary fu' o' care," and are told they'll break the heart of the listener with their wanton glee. The theme was one for which Burns again and again wrote variations. As in *My Nannie's awa'*:

"Thou lav'rock that springs frae the dews o' the lawn,  
The shepherd to warn o' the grey-breaking dawn,  
And thou mellow mavis that hails the nightfa',  
Give over for pity!"

So in *Craigieburn-wood*: he hears the wild birds singing, but it is pain and grief to a weary wight, with care his bosom wringing. So again in his *Address to the Wood-lark*: "For pity's sake, sweet bird, nae mair, or my poor

heart is broken!" Wordsworth's impassioned stanzas, beginning, "'Tis said that some have died for love," will occur to many, in regard of the appeal,—

"Thou thrush, that singest loud—and loud and free,  
 Into yon row of alders flit, . . .  
 Or sing another song, or choose another tree"—

for the strain disturbed the sorrower till the sound was more than he could bear. And so perhaps will a passage in the *Excursion*, descriptive of small birds singing happily to mates happy as they :

"——With spirit-saddening power  
 Winds pipe through fading woods ; but those blithe notes  
 Strike the deserted to the heart : I speak  
 Of what I know, and what we feel within."

The author of *Oldtown Folks* pictures a pensive maiden sitting down by the window, thoughtful and sad, and listening to the crickets, whose "ignorant jollity often sounds as mournfully to us mortals as ours may to superior beings. There the little hoarse black wretches were scraping and creaking, as if life and death were invented solely for their pleasure, and the world were created only to give them a good time in it ;"—and in a later chapter, the serious maiden, warbling an earnest and plaintive hymn-tune, is challenged to a singing match by a robin who perches himself hard by in the lilacs, and indulges in exuberant carollings—the merry *roulades* of the bird, "filled to the throat with ignorant joy," coming in singular contrast with the sadder notes breathed by a creature born for immortal life. On the more tragical page of another book from the same pen, a tale of the dismal swamp, we read how nothing was heard for awhile but the warbling of the birds, "singing cheerily, ignorant of the abyss of cruelty and crime over which they sung." We watch the hero's death. "And the birds sang on as they ever sing, unterrified

by the great wail of human sorrow." In vain the frequent appeal of poets and poetesses to this effect—

"I prithee, cease thy song! for from my heart  
Thou hast made memory's bitter waters start,  
And filled my weary eyes with the soul's rain."

Or this, of a transatlantic bard, who utters it in the guise of a formal Complaint:—

"Birds of song and beauty, lo, I charge you all with blame:—  
I can borrow for my sorrow nothing that avails  
From your lonely note, that only speaks of joy that never fails."

One of Mrs. Browning's latest and most characteristic poems, is *Bianca among the Nightingales*, with its refrain of "These nightingales will sing me mad! The nightingales, the nightingales." They torture and deride, Bianca complains: "I cannot bear these nightingales . . . They'll sing and stun me in the tomb—the nightingales, the nightingales!" The swallow is similarly apostrophized by Owen Meredith: "Thou comest to mock me with remembered things; I love thee not, O bird for me too gay." Of another spirit is the poor imprisoned gaberlunzie, Edie Ochiltree, when the sunbeams shine fair on the rusty bars of his grated dungeon, and a miserable linnet, whose cage some caged debtor had obtained permission to attach to the window, begins to greet him with song. "Ye're in better spirits than I am," quoth Edie to the bird, "for I can neither whistle nor sing for thinking o' the bonnie burnsides and green shaws that I should have been dandering beside in weather like this." It is before the Cousin Phillis of Mrs. Gaskell's pretty pastoral story becomes sad-hearted, with good reason, that she cultivates the art of warbling in imitation and in emulation of the birds—"really gurgled, and whistled, and warbled, just as they did, out of the very fulness and joy of her heart." All too soon their merry music becomes to her a thing to be



deprecatèd, not mimickèd; when her feelings would rather be those of Mary in *The Gates Ajar*, exclaiming "I hate the blue-birds flashing in and out of the carmine cloud that the maple makes, and singing, singing, everywhere," and finding it all too easy to understand how Bianca heard "the nightingales sing through her head," and how she could call them "owl-like birds" that sang "for spite," sang "for hate," sang "for doom." So with Magdalen in *No Name*, looking up at the far faint blue of the sky: "She heard the joyous singing of birds among the ivy that clothed the ruins. Oh, the cold distance of the heavens! Oh, the pitiless happiness of the birds!" And so with George Eliot's Caterina, when the birds were chirping and trilling their new autumnal songs so joyously, and *she* moved through all this woodland joy like a poor wounded leveret painfully dragging its little body through the sweet clover-tufts—for it, sweet in vain. The case is altered when the bird, by poetic licence, attunes her strain to the mood of the moody mourner, and is as melancholy as melancholy heart could wish; as with Spenser's squire and turtle-dove:—

"Shee sitting by him, as on ground he lay,  
Her mournfull notes full piteously did frame,  
And thereof made a lamentable lay;  
. . . and with her mournfull muse  
Him to recomfort in his greatest care,  
That much did ease his mourning and misfare."

But why should song-birds all our space engross? Songs out of season are from human throats, however dulcet the wind-pipe, to them that are sad at heart, as vinegar upon nitre. "Silence that harsh music," is Sforza's injunction, in Massinger's *Duke of Milan*, when bad news has suddenly made harsh what was so sweet before:—

“ Silence that harsh music ;  
 ’Tis now unseasonable : a tolling bell,  
 As a sad harbinger to tell me that  
 This pampered lump of flesh must feed the worms,  
 Is fitter for me.—I am sick.”

Landor’s dejected queen, in *Giovanna of Naples*, rebukes her companion’s sprightliness with the assurance,

“ ——— Nothing on this earth so wounds  
 The stricken bosom, as such sportiveness,  
 Or weighs worn spirits down like levity.”

As a much older writer has it, in the *Mirroure for Magistrates*, as for trying—

“ To move the sad a pleasant tale to heere,  
 Your time is lost, and you no whit the neere.”

Béranger assumed a very great deal when he declared himself an exception to his kind,—and the sort of exception only to prove the rule,—

“ Mais je possède une gaieté  
 Qui n’offense point la tristesse.”

—o—

## XXV.

### THE CURSE CAUSELESS.

PROVERBS xxvi. 2.

HOW should Balaam curse whom God had not cursed ? “ The curse causeless shall not come.” But King David checked the sons of Zeruiah, that would fain stop the cursings of Shimei, the son of Gera. “ So let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David. . . . Let him alone, and let him curse ; for the Lord hath bidden him.” For all that, David cherished a hope that the Lord would look upon him in his affliction—thus afflicted, thus accursed—and would requite him good for Shimei’s cursing, that day.

The homely adage has it, that curses, like chickens, come home to roost.

Una, in Spenser's *Fairie Queene* is pursued with anathemas by the sightless hag who thinks to owe her a grudge, and who is instant in imprecations that plagues and mischief and long misery may fall on her, and follow all the way, and that in endless error she may ever stray.

"But when she saw her prayers nought prevaile,  
She backe retourned with some labour lost."

Shirley's Elder brother is overwhelmed with distress at his infuriate sire's invocation of a too hasty anathema: "His curse; dost comprehend what that word carries, shot from a father's angry breath?" But casuistry is not devoid of comfort in such cases, where spleen is the motive power. "Can he be blest," asks Titus, in Howard Payne's tragedy, "on whom a father's direful curse shall fall?" The answer given is:—

"A madman's imprecation is no curse."\*

Without a cause, it shall be without effect; having no cause to show, it shall have none of the virtue of a cause in itself; it came out of nothing, and nothing shall come of it. Yet can an atrocious Cenci believe, or pretend to believe, that his imprecations have found a gracious hearing, and an instant compliance:—

\* There is something of reason, as well as of irreverent wit, in the retort of Molière's Cléante, when his furibund father dismisses him with a "*Je te donne ma malédiction.*" The answer Harpagon gets is, "*Je n'ai que faire de vos dons.*"—Infuriated Ralph Nickleby breaks out against Nicholas with "My curse, my bitter deadly curse upon you, boy!" "Whence will curses come at your command?" is the nephew's retort; "or what avails a curse or a blessing from a man like you." The Chronicler of Carlingford simply says of the best energy with which Mrs. Woodburn cursed Barbara, that as these are not melodramatic days, it did the culprit no possible harm.

“’Tis plain I have been favoured from above,  
For when I cursed my sons, they died.”

In another work of Shelley’s we have a recognition of curses not causeless that have come whither they were meant :

“ Pity, not scorn, I felt, though desolate  
The desolator now, and unaware  
The curses which he mocked had caught him by the hair.”

But the execrable Count Francesco is complacent in the theory and practice of execration. He is convinced of his right, and without stint or scruple exercises it. It is his daughter’s turn now :

“ — The world’s Father  
Must grant a parent’s prayer against his child,  
Be he who asks even what men call me.  
Will not the deaths of her rebellious brothers  
Awe her before I speak? For I on them  
Did imprecate quick ruin, and it came.”

He laughs to scorn Lucretia’s entreaty that he unsay his dreadful words of execration,—for his own sake to unsay them, for “when high God grants, He punishes such prayers.” His delight was in cursing, saith the psalmist, and it shall happen unto him : he clothed himself with cursing, like as with a raiment, and it shall be unto him as the cloak that he hath upon him, and as the girdle that he is alway girded withal. “Though they curse, yet bless Thou,” is a prayer, and a rational as well as a devout one. It may perhaps be said of curses as of *Pax vobiscum* in the gospels, where “Peace be to this house!” is said to avail if the son of peace be there : “if not, it shall turn to you again.” So, if no meet object of execration be found, the curse shall turn to the curser again ; not be lost, or wasted, but light on his own head.

The curse of the Holy Father is not always infallible,



whatever himself may be. Pope Innocent III. denounced against Alfonso, King of Leon, for marrying within the prohibited degrees, a still severer infliction of Divine vengeance than had befallen Isabella, whose two husbands, Conrad of Montferrat and Henry of Champagne, "God had smitten with death." "The Pope's vaticination," remarks Dean Milman, "was singularly unfortunate: the son of this unblessed union grew up a king of the most exemplary valour, virtue, and prosperity; and after his death the canonized Ferdinand was admitted into the holy assembly of the saints."—Remarking upon the angry excitement produced in Germany of late by the maledictory Allocution of the Pope, one of our foremost journalists showed how we in England have, in our day, been cursed, and interdicted, and excommunicated by the reigning Pope of the time in every form of execration known to employers of ecclesiastical Latin; and how we nevertheless went on our way, did exactly as we pleased, ignored the Pope and his views of things human and divine, and used the power of the State as we thought expedient; the consequence being that we now get on quite comfortably with Rome, and that no Pope thinks now of cursing England, because Englishmen would not in the slightest degree mind if he did. "The Italians, it must be said to their credit, have acted exactly in the same way. They have been steadily cursed for twelve or thirteen years, and have got so used to it that the Pope now directs his choicest language against those who will feel it more." He must have been very much gratified, it is assumed, by the reception which his eloquence met with in Germany—so novel to him would be the delight of finding that he had enemies whom he could sting. No middle course is seen to be open to those who find themselves cursed by the Pope:—either, when cursing,

he speaks with divine authority, and then his rebukes ought to be accepted with humble contrition ; or he does but utter the sentiments of an amiable but irritable Italian gentleman, and then his curses are not more worth regarding than if they came from the lips of a Roman marquis. Observers of times and seasons, a Saturday Reviewer remarked in 1863, must even then be beginning to suspect that the cause of Victor Emmanuel was after all likely to thrive, and that three or four years of quiet possession might probably throw a doubt on the validity or efficacy of the most furious Papal curses.

Shenstone sententiously affirms in one of his essays, that if any one's curse can effect damnation, it is not that of the Pope, but that of the poor.

*Noli æmulari* is the theme and the title of a little poem of Arthur Hugh Clough's in deprecation of imprecatory controversialists, all and sundry :—

“What though, in blood their souls embruing,  
The great, the good and wise they curse,  
Still sinning, what they know not doing ;  
Stand still, forbear, nor make it worse.

“By curses, by denunciation,  
The coming fate they cannot stay ;  
Nor thou, by fiery indignation,  
Though just, accelerate the day.”

Jeremy Taylor has this to say of cursing, in his sermon on flattery,—that although the causeless curse shall return upon the tongue that spake it, yet, because very often there is a fault on both sides, when there is reviling or cursing on either, the danger of a cursing tongue is highly to be declined, as the biting of a mad dog or the tongue of a smitten serpent. And in another discourse the same great preacher adverts to the quarrel between Chrysostom and Epiphanius, saints both, when “Epiphanius wished that St. Chrysostom might not die a bishop ; and he, in a peevish exchange, wished that

Epiphanius might never return to his bishopric : when they had forgotten their foolish anger, God remembered it, and said 'Amen' to both their cursed speakings."

Curses causeless are deprecated by Walter Shandy as so much waste of our strength and soul's health to no manner of purpose. "'They are like sparrowshot,' quoth my Uncle Toby, 'fired against a bastion.' 'They serve,' continues the other, 'to stir the humours, but carry off none of their acrimony.'"

The Duchess of Malfi, in Webster's darksome drama, exchanges her resolve, "I will go pray," for a wild and whirling impulse, "No, I'll go curse." "I could curse the stars," she exclaims in her frenzy, "and the smiling seasons of the year into a Russian winter; nay, the world to its first chaos." Curse the stars? A bystander points upward—for it is night-time—and bids her mark, despite her anathema, "Look you, the stars shine still." Not to be baffled, the unhappy raver replies: "Oh, but you must remember, my curse hath a great way to go." From other of our old dramatists might be cited parallel passages in illustration of the text. Friar Bacon, in Robert Greene's *Honourable History* (1594), dismisses his serving-man, Miles, from his service,

"—— with a fatal curse,  
That direful plague and mischief fall on thee.

*Miles.*—"Tis no matter; I am against you with the old proverb—The more the fox is cursed, the better he fares."

A single play of Shakspeare's—*King Richard III.*—abounds in passages to the purpose; as where, to Queen Margaret excluding Buckingham from the compass of her curse, the duke replies by excluding all his companions too;

"—— for curses never pass  
The lips of those that breathe them in the air

*Queen Margaret.*—"I'll not believe but they ascend the sky,  
And there awake God's gentle-sleeping peace."

The queen is an adept in cursing, and is over and over again reminded how fatally her curses have come home to her, as well as those invoked upon her by embittered foes. Interrupted in one instance by Gloster—"Oh, let me make the period to my curse"—she cries :

"*Gloster.*—'Tis done by me, and ends in Margaret.

*Queen Elizabeth.*—Thus have you breathed your curse against yourself."

"Can curses pierce the clouds and enter heaven?" she had exclaimed just before ; "Why, then, give place, dull clouds, to my quick curses." As the tragedy works out its gloomy way, those whom she has cursed, not causelessly, believe they recognize in their varied doom the effect of her imprecations. Long before her decline and fall she had, by her violence, moved Suffolk to remonstrate, "Cease, gentle queen, these execrations." But she taunts him with womanish cowardice in not joining in her strain. Has he not spirit to curse his enemies? Plenty, it seems,\* were there any use in it ; but that is just what he cannot see. He would curse away, with a will, and without end, could he but believe the curses would tell home. But he knows they will not. What are such curses but lost breath? And, thus vented, wasting their bitterness on the desert air, they betoken not merely lost breath, but, to all intents and purposes, a lost soul.

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\* Curse he does, afterwards, to show that he can. And with such vehemence and such fertility he does it, that she who prompted him shudders and entreats him to pause ; for,

"—— these dread curses, like the sun 'gainst glass,  
Or like an overchargèd gun, recoil,  
And turn the force of them upon thyself."

Second Part of *King Henry VI.*, Act iii., Sc. 2. Cf. *King Richard III.*, Act i., Sc. 3, passim ; Act iii., Sc. 3 ; Act iv., Sc. 1 and 4 ; Act v., Sc. 1.



## XXVI.

### MEDDLER'S MISCHANCE.

PROVERBS xxvi. 17.

HE that passeth by and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is likened in the Book of Proverbs to one that taketh a dog by the ears. The meddlesome Marplots of daily life, assiduously officious and blunderingly busy,—the busybodies in other men's matters, against whom an apostle directs a sharp sentence of warning and rebuke,—are disposed of as they deserve in the moral of one of La Fontaine's Fables :

“ Ainsi certaines gens, faisant les empressés,  
S'introduisent dans les affaires :  
Ils font partout les nécessaires,  
Et, partout importuns, devraient être chassés.”

But there are well-meaning meddlers, whose meddling involves them in mischance. To interpose between a contentious couple, who by wedlock are one, is notoriously a hazardous enterprise. Assize cases and police reports are often cited to show what may be expected by those who interfere between man and wife—namely, the joint hostility of the two. Typical enough is the instance of the wife who, in terror for her life from her husband's violence, sent for the police, and they for a doctor, the man being in a state of *delirium tremens*: the doctor came, and did what he thought necessary; and when the patient had recovered, his wife joined him in resenting the uncalled-for interposition of strangers, and flatly denying any real cause or pretext for it.

Honest Arthur Gorges, that stanch friend of Raleigh's, only found the way of the world an odd one, not an uncommon one, when, seeing Sir Walter and Sir George

Carew "brawl and scramble like madmen," he played the part of him who taketh a dog by the ears, for he purchased, as he describes it, "such a rap on the knuckles, that I wished both their pates broken, and with much ado they stayed their brawl to see my bloody fingers," and then set to work to abuse the hapless peacemaker. Not always, not altogether, blessed is the peacemaker, so far as this world goes, and the way of this world.

Sganarelle and Martine in *Le Médecin malgré lui*, are the liveliest exemplars on record, perhaps, of the characteristic that here claims our notice. The woodcutter is exasperated by the volley of bad names his virago of a wife discharges at him—"traître! trompeur! lâche! coquin! pendard! gueux! fripon! maraud! voleur!" etc., etc. She will have it, will she, then? he says, as he lifts the stick to her: "Ah! vous en voulez donc?" [*Sganarelle prend un bâton, et bat sa femme.*] M. Robert hears the cries of the beaten vixen, and hurries to the rescue. *Holà! holà! holà!* Fie upon it! What is all this? Cudgel a woman! Infamous! He will teach the scoundrel to know better.—But Martine is beforehand with Sganarelle in resenting the interference. What business is it of M. Robert's? She chooses to be beaten. "Je veux qu'il me batte, moi!—De quoi vous mêlez-vous? Est-ce là votre affaire?—Voyez un peu cet impertinent, qui veut empêcher les maris de battre leurs femmes!" M. Robert is full of conciliatory interjections of acquiescence, and defers absolutely to the lady's view of the case; but her wrath waxes hotter and hotter with every concession. Why should he thrust in his nose? Let him mind his own business. She likes to be beaten. It is not at M. Robert's expense: it costs *him* nothing: then why should he be pushing himself forward where he's not wanted? He's a fool, she tells him flat, for meddling in what don't

concern him one bit ; and with a box on the ear she enforces her argument, a *soufflet* that may well stagger the intruder. M. Robert thereupon begs her husband's pardon with all his heart, and bids him beat, drub, cudgel, thrash, castigate his wife as much as he likes : for the matter of that, M. Robert will help him, if he wishes it. This brings the husband to the fore. No, it is *not* his wish. He will beat her if he likes, and he won't beat her if he don't like ; but he won't be dictated to, or interfered with. She is his, Sganarelle's, wife, not M. Robert's. M. Robert has no voice in the matter at all. Sganarelle don't want his help. And M. Robert is simply an impertinent ass in meddling with other folks' private matters ; which having said, Sganarelle gives the meddler a good beating, and sends him flying, as if for dear life.

Agolanti, in the *Legend of Florence*, gives Rondinelli a piece of his mind, in more polished terms, but in a very similar spirit to that of Molière's woodcutter and wife-beater :

“ — I laugh at you.

And let me tell you at parting, that the way  
To serve a lady best, and have her faults  
Lightliest admonished by her lawful helper,  
Is not to thrust a lawless vanity  
’Twixt him and his vexed love.”

Captain Marryat's autobiographic Stapleton records his coming to grief for standing up for a beaten wife, who, having made it up with her assailant, joins him in turning on the mediator, whom they jointly bid pack off, and never show his face there again. Cooper's Esther Bush, in the *Prairie*, invites and invokes sympathy with her lot as a wife, but as soon as it is expressed, turns on the too ready sympathizer, and resents such impertinence in a third party, who thus presumes to set

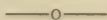
up as a judge, and wrongs a man she won't hear a word against—fluent and affluent and effluent of such words as the termagant wife may be herself. When the Country Fellow in *Philaster* comes upon the hero in the act of wounding Arethusa in the forest, and with a cry of shame on the “dastard,” is for spoiling his sport, “What ill-bred man art thou, to intrude thyself?” is all the thanks he gets on the sufferer's part, to say nothing of the keen edge of Philaster's drawn sword. Montesquieu, in his Persian Letters, expatiates on the love the Muscovite women have to be beaten by their husbands, whose hearts they doubt of having really secured, unless by palpable proofs on their persons in black and blue. “Je crois que si quelque voisin venoit au secours, je l'étranglerois,” one of them declares. The sensitiveness of the stronger vessel in such cases of a little domestic difficulty, where however the grey mare is the better horse, is exemplified in an epigram of Dean Swift's: —

“As Thomas was cudgelled one day by his wife,  
He took to the street, and fled for his life :  
Tom's three dearest friends came by in the squabble,  
And saved him at once from the shrew and the rabble ;  
Then ventured to give him some sober advice—  
But Tom is a person of honour so nice,  
Too wise to take counsel, too proud to take warning,  
That he sent to all three a challenge next morning.  
Three duels he fought, thrice ventured his life ;  
Went home, and was cudgelled again by his wife.”

The three friends at least ventured each of their three lives too ; and probably went home mindful of the proverb that he that passeth by and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears. In this case a mad dog, or something like it ; a sad dog, at any rate, and one whose bark was *not* worse than his bite, for he proved himself just as ready to bite as to bark.



Cold and selfish prudence is only too willing to abide by the teaching of the proverb, and make a practical application of it perpetual, to their own comfort and security. But there are times when the dog must be taken by the ears, and defied to do his worst. Meddlers are liable to mischances, but a magnanimous spirit will not accept them as a veto on all intervention. Moses, man of God, seeing two of his brethren strive together, would have set them at one again, but was rebuffed by the wrong-doer, who thrust him away, saying, "Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?" The rebuff was followed by a reminder that made Moses flee. Else he was not the man to flee at a rebuff. It is the priest of a degraded type, it is the levite of a lukewarm faith and selfish life, that, seeing the wounded man, and smelling strife, and suspecting the vicinity of the violent, declines to meddle with what (let him hope) belongeth not to him (let good Samaritans meddle and make as they list); and so passeth by on the other side.



## XXVII.

*SPORTIVE MISCHIEF.*

PROVERBS xxvi. 19.

AS a madman who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, so, in the ethics of the Book of Proverbs, "is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport?" Practical jokes come into this category. Practically, they are no jokes. Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, rather than such a fool in his folly. Smollett characterizes as "preposterous and unaccountable" the passion which prompts persons, otherwise generous and sympathizing, to afflict and perplex their

fellow-creatures in this way ; but his fictions give unwelcome prominence to feats of the kind, wrought by his Peregrine Pickles and their like ; and hence a part of their popularity with boisterous youth, whose animal spirits are yet above par, and their rational development considerably below it. Theodore Hook, himself at one time an egregious artist in the degrading art, could moralize in mature age on the "frequent serious effects of practical jokes," and in the *Daly* of his *Gilbert Gurney* he took pains to "expose" at length the pranks and absurdities of what the Chinese would call a first-chop performer in the line. "Mr. Daly, however, escaped without doing any very serious mischief to anybody but himself ; and so the retribution was satisfactory, and the fool's bolt once shot, the fool himself was obliged to bolt at last." But the author's lingering zest for such performances is obvious in his book ; he may satirize and show up the performers, but he is interested in them—whether it be a Stephen Sutterthwaite, the sort of fellow who could pull your chair from under you, just as you were going to sit down, and "what fun !" when you came with your head right against a steel fender or a marble chimney-piece ; or that Duke of Montague of the last century, whose passion for practical jokes upon a great scale was so inordinate ; or, "a noble earl, not many years dead," who, in order to divert himself and two or three chosen friends at another's expense, used sometimes to invite to dine with him six stammerers and stutterers, or three men six feet four high and three men scarcely four feet six, or a half-dozen sufferers from some nervous affection, of the St. Vitus's dance order, wherewith to make merry on system. The fictions of Mr. Albert Smith were still more replete with samples of the pronounced practical joker, mostly cads of the most incurable sort, gents whom none but gents could put up

with in life, or care to read about in monthly magazines. His Mr. Jollit in one story is not very much the social superior of his Skittler in another—that Skittler who dealt in detonating balls to explode at the feet of old ladies, and Waterloo crackers to pull at the ears of old gentlemen, and ginger bread nuts made of cayenne pepper; and there is again his medical student, Mr. Barnes, chiefly remarkable for playing rude tricks, as a clown might be expected to do, in private life, and who never lost an opportunity, nor did the same thing twice, “which distinguished him from funny people generally.” Sheridan lived in a day when the art and practice of elaborate practical jokes were better appreciated than now, and he piqued himself on his skill as an amateur, and won whatever *kudos* such perpetrations might deserve, by strewing the hall with plates and dishes, and knives and forks stuck between them, and then tempting Tickell (with whom, says Moore, he was always at some frolic or other) to pursue him into the thick of them, where the victim duly fell, and was almost cut to pieces. Sheridan, by Rogers’s account, was always at these tricks in country houses. “He has been known to send a man and horse eight miles for a piece of crape, and people were always kept in expectation of some forthcoming frolic.” Far-gone indeed in Bæotian dulness must the country house be, or have been, that could be entertained by sport of this far-fetching and far-fetched kind. Even in the denizens of a common gaol it takes the mild benignity of a Vicar of Wakefield to pardon, or at least to put up with, the gamesome sallies that relieve their stagnant existence. “I found the prisoners very merry,” writes Dr. Primrose, “expecting my arrival; and each prepared with some gaol trick to play upon the doctor. Thus, as I was going to begin [divine service], one turned my wig awry, as if by accident, and

then asked my pardon. A second, who stood at some distance, had a knack of spitting through his teeth, which fell in showers upon my book." A third would cry Amen in such a manner as to give the rest great delight. A fourth deftly picked the good man's pocket of his spectacles. But the one whose trick gave more entire gratification than all the rest, was he that dexterously displaced the vicar's books on the table before him, and put a scandalous jest-book of his own in their place. One of Swift's *Tatlers* is about Goodman Cross, whose stable-boy "was a gibing companion, that would always have his jest. He would often put cow-itch in the beds, pull stools from under folks, and lay a coal upon their shoes when they were asleep. He was at last turned off for some notable piece of roguery; and when I came away, was loitering among the ale-houses. Bless me! thought I, what a prodigious wit would this have been with us!" The sense of mischief is, indeed, said to be a sense which goes quickly to sleep as soon as childhood is over, from mere want of opportunity: the boy who wants to trip up his tutor can easily find a string to tie across the garden walk; but when one has got beyond the simpler joys of childhood, strings are not so easy to find. "To carry out a practical joke of the Christopher Sly sort, we require, as Shakspeare saw, the resources of a prince." The history of Frederick the Great affords ample warrant for Macaulay's censure on that prince, for indulging in a taste which may be pardoned in a boy, but which when habitually and deliberately fostered by a man of mature age and strong understanding, is almost invariably the sign of a bad heart, a taste for severe practical jokes. Thus, if a courtier was fond of dress, oil was flung over his richest suit; if he was fond of money, some prank was invented to make him disburse more than he could spare;



if he was hypochondriacal, he was made to believe that he had the dropsy ; if he had particularly set his heart on visiting a place, a letter was forged to frighten him from going thither. To the plea that these things are trifles, Macaulay answers, that, granting them to be trifles, they are indications, not to be mistaken, of a nature to which the sight of human suffering and human degradation is an agreeable excitement.

The point at which practical joking becomes a serious offence, is defined to be that where it passes from the category of boyish fun to that of intentional personal annoyance ; and it is because practical joking among grown-up people seldom can be anything else but this latter, that it ought to be, and as a rule is, discountenanced among them. Satirical describers of the ways of country houses refer to the pleasing relief sometimes found in practical joking, when mind and body are wearied out by the cares of shooting and hunting : to put a man into his bath in the middle of the night must be an unfailing source of amusement, enhanced as it may be by a sense of personal danger ; while to cut up his hair-brushes, cut off his coat-tails, put animals, dead or alive, into his bed, to hammer his head against the wall, having previously wrapped him in a blanket, are commended as ingenuities highly in vogue with men of taste. "In proportion to the age and position of the subject will be the entertainment derived." Hartley Coleridge was in this sense anæsthetic enough to denounce all practical jokes as in bad taste. But most of all he abhorred those which play upon the fears of the timid, or, like forged love-letters, work on the affections of the susceptible ; while he confessed a perhaps too lenient toleration for such tricks as only infringe on the purses of the avaricious, or the dignity of official or self-importance. Age and infirmity, however, he would at any rate hold sacred.

As there are reckless practical jokers, who must have their joke ; so are there reckless verbal jesters, who must have their jest.

La Bruyère reckons among the characteristics of a right royal nature, “un grand éloignement pour la raillerie piquante, ou assez de raison pour ne se le permettre point.” Elsewhere he had said, what nobody before him (he believed) had said, and what he dared to say, that those who do hurt to the reputation or the well-being of others, rather than lose the chance of saying a smart thing, deserve some thoroughly ignominious punishment : *méritent une peine infamante*. Gay warns all and sundry such misdoers that

“In wit and war the bully race  
Contribute to their own disgrace :  
Too late the forward youth shall find  
That jokes are sometimes paid in kind ;  
Or if they canker in the breast,  
He makes a foe who makes a jest.”

This is directed to the address of the lad of all-sufficient merit, who “with modesty ne’er damps his spirit,” but noisy jokes at random throws, bespattering both friends and foes. The temptation of saying a smart and witty thing, or *bon mot*, and the malicious applause with which it is commonly received, has made people who can say them, and still oftener (remarks Lord Chesterfield) people who think they can, but cannot, and yet try,—more enemies, and implacable ones too, than any other thing the politest of peers could think of. “It is a decided folly to lose a friend for a jest ; but in my mind, it is not a much less degree of folly, to make an enemy of an indifferent and neutral person, for the sake of a *bon mot*.” Swift’s metrical epistle to Mr. Delany includes the caution,—

“If what you said I wish unspoke,  
'Twill not suffice it was a joke ;

Reproach not, though in jest, a friend,  
For those defects he cannot mend.

\* \* \* \* \*

"When jests are carried on too far,  
And the loud laugh begins the war,  
You keep your countenance for shame,  
Yet still you think your friend to blame;  
For though men cry they love a jest,  
'Tis but when others stand the test;  
And (would you have their meaning known)  
They love a jest that is their own."

Lady Acheson's Panegyric on the Dean thus compliments him on the character of *his* jesting :

"Now as a jester I accost you ;  
Which never yet one friend has lost you.  
You judge so nicely to a hair,  
How far to go, and when to spare ; . . .  
There's none so ignorant and weak  
To take offence at what you speak."

Cicero's excellence at hitting off a jest or repartee animated his pleadings, but his reluctance ever to lose one, at whosoever cost, was a frequent and final cause of offence, and, says Plutarch, "got him the character of a malevolent man." His employing indiscriminately his gift of cutting raillery, merely to raise a laugh, *plutôt que de perdre un bon mot*, "rendered him extremely obnoxious." He "never spared his jests upon his allies." Like Prior's

"Pontius, who loves, you know, a joke,  
Much better than he loves his life ;"—

and therefore, and to that extent, *unlike*

"Pontia, that civil prudent she,  
Who values wit much less than sense,  
And never darts a repartee  
But purely in her own defence."

No less improper than unsafe, one of our seventeenth-century essayists deems it, to "fling about at random

this wormwood of the brain, our wit ; for some noses are too tender to endure the smell of it." And though there may be many, he adds, who, like tiled houses, can admit a falling spark without injury ; yet some, again, are covered with such light, dry straw, that with the least touch they will kindle, and flame about your ears. "Laughter should dimple the cheek, not furrow the brow." "It is but an unhappy wit, which stirs up enemies against the owner of it. A man may spit out his friend from his tongue, or laugh him into an enemy." Gall and mirth seem to Feltham an ill and unnatural mixture. It is the pronounced quality of good taste, in the flush of excitement and the exuberance of invention never to say a thing better not said—to exercise always a nice and true discrimination, to suppress the unseasonable witticism, to quench the sudden flash, to be witty and wise, keeping wit well in hand. A French critic says of the old trouvère Rutebeuf, who satirized and slashed away at the prelates, whom he yet knew to be under royal protection, "*N'importe. Il aime mieux perdre la protection du roi qu'une malice.*" George Herbert calls

"Wit an unruly engine, wildly striking  
Sometimes a friend, sometimes the engineer.  
Hast thou the knack ? pamper it not with liking :  
But if thou want it, buy it not too dear.  
Many affecting wit beyond their power,  
Have got to be a dear fool for an hour."

A fastidious taste is critical of its own conceits ; but bad taste, as a discourser upon it observes, is apt to throw itself headlong, and blindfold, after the first scent of a joke. The jocose element is the true arena of bad taste ; for what is grave bad taste to facetious bad taste ? "How terrible some people are in their jokes ! And it need not be a bad joke either, to be in bad taste." It is



not because the jester is devoid of humour, but because, in his pursuit of it, every consideration of time and place is disregarded ; till in fact an offensive inappropriateness becomes the very crown of the jest.

“ — I'll not lose my jeer,  
Though I be beaten dead for 't,”

vows Massinger's Marrall. Phædrus flouts the fools who often, while trying to raise a silly giggle, provoke others by gross affronts, and so put themselves in real jeopardy. “ *Plerumque stulti risum dum captant levem, Gravi distringunt alios contumeliâ, Et sibi nocivum concitant periculum.*” Shenstone's comment on the saying that wits will lose their best friend for the sake of a joke, is, that candour may discover the cause to be, not the less degree of their benevolence, but the greater degree of their love of fame. On the other hand, Addison treats the matter as one mainly of good nature. The good-natured man, he says, may sometimes bring his wit in question, because he is apt to be moved with compassion for those misfortunes and infirmities which another would turn into ridicule, and by that means obtain the reputation of a wit. Whereas the ill-natured man gives himself a larger field to expatiate in, exposes the feelings in human nature which the other would cast a veil over, falls indifferently upon friends or enemies, exposes the person who has obliged him, and in short sticks at nothing that may establish his character as a wit.

“ A man renowned for repartee  
Will seldom scruple to make free  
With friendship's finest feeling ;  
Will thrust a dagger at your breast,  
And say he wounded you in jest,  
By way of balm for healing.”

This stanza of Cowper's is in effect a paraphrase of the proverb, where the flinger of firebrands, arrows, and

death, thinks to right himself with the query, Am I not in sport ?

Sterne refers to the class of Yorick's "indiscretions" his trick of saying whatever came uppermost—and he had but too many temptations in life of scattering his gibes and his jests about him, nor were they lost for want of gathering. The jester raised a laugh at the jestee's expense, and thought no more about it ; but the jests were not therefore crossed out of the jestee's book of remembrance. And Yorick, "to speak the truth, had wantonly involved himself in a multitude of small book debts of this stamp, which, notwithstanding Eugenius's advice, he too much disregarded ;" Eugenius persistently warning him that, one day or other, he would certainly be reckoned with, and to the uttermost mite. Biron, in Shakspeare, is marked out for censure, and for penance as—

"A man replete with mocks,  
Full of comparisons and wounding flouts ;  
Which he on all estates will execute,  
That lie within the mercy of his wit."

The only soil of his fair virtue's gloss, another speaker says of him, is a sharp wit matched with too blunt a will ; "whose edge hath power to cut, whose will still wills it none should spare that come within his power." Richelieu's strange mocking humour is believed to have made him more enemies than his political sins ; and we are told that his courtiers were always at work to hunt up some ridiculous character on whom the Cardinal might vent his bitter *plaisanteries*. Burnet describes Savile, Lord Halifax, as "a man of great and ready wit, . . . much turned to satire . . . His severe jest was preferred by him to all arguments whatever ; and he was endless in council, if he could find a new jest," etc. It was Dr. South's custom, a

clerical contemporary testifies, "to suffer neither sacredness of place nor solemnity of subject to restrain his vein of humour,"—and the remark is made in reference to an "illiberal and cruel" witticism of his, at the expense of Anthony à Wood, whose friendship it cost him. A bit of dialogue between G ron te and Florise, in *Le M chant* of Gresset, is characteristically pertinent: "Croyez-vous qu'il soit sourd, et qu'il n'ait rien senti?" exclaims the former, by way of remonstrance, and in behalf of a butt:

"— Vous autres, fortes t tes,  
 Vous voil ! vous prenez tous les gens pour des b tes;  
 Et ne m nageant rien . . . .  
*Florise* Eh mais! tant pis pour lui,  
 S'il s'en est offens ; c'est aussi trop d'ennui,  
 S'il faut   chaque mot voir comme on peut le prendre.  
 Je dis ce qui me vient et l'on peut me le rendre:  
 Le ridicule est fait pour notre amusement,  
 Et la plaisanterie est libre."

The story of the life of a celebrated German satirist of the last century, Christian Ludwig Liscov, is that of one who "might have passed his days in tranquillity, had not his love of ridicule prevailed over his prudence," and involved him in a series of pains and penalties, a state-prison (by some accounts) included. Horace's is a well-known note of warning against the unscrupulous jest-maker, who, so long as he can excite a laugh, spares no friend,—“he has hay upon his horn, give him a wide berth,” in allusion to the old practice of tying a wisp of straw to the horns of a vicious bull:—

“F enum habet in cornu, longe fuge, dummodo risum  
 Excutiat sibi, non hic cuiquam pareat amico.”

Boswell once quoted it with a view to soothe the chafed spirit of David Garrick when Johnson had been deriding him; and at the words, *f enum habet in cornu*, the exasperated actor cried, “Ay, he has a whole *more* of it.” Of George Colman the younger a biographer

records, that for the reputation of a wit he laboured with unwearied assiduity, and alike sacrificed a friend or provoked an enemy, by his efforts to obtain it, Denbigh, in one of Mr. Lister's books, is drawn from the life—a dexterous diner-out and self-seeker, who “would sacrifice any one for the sake of a witticism. You complain that he jested at your misfortunes—did you never hear him jest at the misfortunes of others?” Leslie tells us of Constable, that no man more earnestly desired to stand well with the world; but he could not conceal his opinions of himself and of others, and what he said had too much point not to be repeated, and too much truth not to give offence. Of Sydney Smith, and his personal witticisms, the very exaggerations of which took away their sting, Leslie elsewhere expresses a belief that no man was ever so amusing with so little offence; for those who were the subjects of his jokes were often the most ready to relate them. Although claiming for Professor Aytoun some talent for sharpness of repartee, Mr. Theodore Martin describes him as of too kindly and sympathetic a nature to shine as a wit; for not only was his friend dearer to him than his jest, but he had that fine instinct of pain which suspends many a flash of humour or wit that might dazzle numbers but must wound one. This is better in every way than such a character as Perthes gives of the elder Schlegel, in the way of defence too: “Good-natured he certainly is, if not tempted by a sally of wit.” Cockburn ascribes to Jeffrey an habitual gaiety that never was allowed rein enough to outrun kind feeling. To apply what Henry Mackenzie says of one of his characters, his vivacity only rose to be amiable; no enemy could ever repeat his wit, so as to lose him a friend. The professional diner-out is said by those who have studied him out to make a point of displaying a certain good-



natured dulness, an amiability that shall repress the brightest jest that ever was conceived, if by any possibility the unuttered jest could be thought to tell against one of the party; for "the diner-out must never be known to utter a brilliant witticism at the cost of any dinner-giver." He may crack nuts, whilst dinner-givers and common men crack jokes of that damaging sort. Burns made the judicious grieve for his future when they noticed how completely his wit ever had the start of his judgment, and would lead him to indulge in "raillery uniformly acute," so Dr. Currie styles it, however free it might be from the least desire to wound. The suppression of a telling *bon mot*, from a dread of paining the object of it, has been classed with the virtues "only to be sought for in the calendar of saints;" and Burns was no saint. Fielding makes it one of the peculiarities of his Partridge, that the vice of jesting at all hazards was in him incurable; and though little Benjamin often smarted for it, yet, if ever he conceived a joke, he was certain to be delivered of it, without the least respect of persons, time, or place. So of Launcelot Langstaff, Esquire, we read, that it had ever been his misfortune, that he could not for the soul of him restrain a good thing—which fatality drew upon him the ill-will of many whom he would not have offended for the world. The Hon. Miss Byron points to her immaculate Sir Charles as an example of superiority to this mischievous indulgence, when she upbraidingly asks his less perfect and more outspoken sister, "Think you there are not many who could be as smart and surprising as you, were they to indulge a vein of what you call humour? Do you think your brother is not one? Would he not be too hard for you at your own weapons? But he, a man, can check the overflowing freedom." Mary Stuart, wilful and wanton in wit,

provokes even her devoted Catherine Seyton to exclaim to herself, "Now, Our Lady forgive me! How deep must the love of sarcasm be implanted in us women, since the Queen, with all her sense, will risk ruin rather than rein in her wit." When Ethel Newcome bids her brother Barnes be kind, for that is better than all the wit in the world, she points to desolate old Lady Kew as a warning example: "Look at grandmamma, how witty she was and is; what a reputation she had, how people were afraid of her; and see her now—quite alone." Very different is the smug complacency of the Rev. Charles Honeyman's warning: "Satire! satire! Mr. Pendennis," said that divine, holding up a reproving finger of lavender kid, "beware of a wicked wit!—But when a man has that tendency, I know how difficult it is to restrain." Boileau's

"——jeune fou qui se croit tout permis,  
Et qui pour un bon mot va perdre vingt amis,"

may pair off with Sir Perfidious Oldcraft's exemplar, in Beaumont and Fletcher,

"——a Duke Humphrey spark,  
Had rather lose his dinner than his jest.  
I say I love a wit the best of all things."

To which category may be consigned the whole race of what Jonson's Knowell characterizes and condemns as

"——petulant jeering gamesters, that can spare  
No argument or subject from their jest."

Of which, in another play, rare Ben offers us a salient example in the person of Carlo Buffone, who will sooner lose his soul than a jest, and profane even the most holy things, to excite laughter.

## XXVIII.

### SELF-BESTOWED PRAISE.

PROVERBS xxvii. 2.\*

EVERY man his own trumpeter, is, ironically or otherwise, an accepted adage; but it is not among the Proverbs of Solomon. His counsel on the subject takes another direction altogether: "Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips." James Howel, the great old letter-writer, quoting the Latin proverb, *propria laus sordet in ore*, thus pungently paraphrases it: "Be a man's breath ever so sweet, yet it makes one's praise stink, if he makes his own mouth the conduit-pipe of it." But some people think they can do their own praise best. Who else is so competent to appreciate and appraise them? The Milverton of *Friends in Council* somewhere observes that praise is always a dull thing; that people seldom spend much time in praising; and that when a man looks back upon his misspent hours, he will not find that he has to reproach himself for many of them having been spent in commendation. La Rochefoucauld once avowed, ironically or not, his repentance of the law he had prescribed to himself of never uttering his own praises: what a many more followers and partisans he might have had, but for that self-denying ordinance! Look, for instance, said he, at M. de Roquelaure and M. de Miossens, who discourse for a couple of hours together before a score of persons, bepraising themselves the whole time; there are only

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\* For another set of illustrations of this text, see the chapter headed "Self-Praise," in the First Series of *Secular Annotations on Scripture Texts*, pp. 96-100.

two or three out of the twenty who find them insufferable, and the remaining seventeen applaud and regard them as peerless—*comme des gens qui n'ont point leurs semblables*. Sainte-Beuve suggests that if Roquelaure and Miossens had judiciously intermingled with their self-commendations a little praise of their listeners, they would have been better listened to still. That is to say, one may infer, that all the twenty would have been good listeners ; as to the seventeen, they surely were as good as could be already.

Ehlepplie, the Cingalese grandee, in Joanna Baillie's Indian drama, candidly demands,—

“If I commend myself, who, like myself,  
Can know so well my actual claims to praise?”

to which demand an acquiescent companion maliciously responds, “Most true ; for surely no one else doth know it.” When the red Indian of another hemisphere calls upon the moribund old trapper in Cooper's *Prairie* to tell his auditory how many Mingoes he has struck, and what acts of valour and justice he has done, that they may know how to admire, and so come to imitate him, he replies, with simple earnestness of manner and speech, “A boastful tongue is not heard in the heaven of a white man. . . . No, my son, a pale-face may not sing his own praises, and hope to have them acceptable before his God.” So thinks not the vaunting Pharamond, Prince of Spain, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster*, whose opening speech is “nothing but a large inventory of his own commendations,” moving Dion to the speculation,—

“I wonder what's his price ? For certainly  
He'll sell himself, he has so praised his shape.”

Arbaces in the *King and No King* of the same joint-stock authorship, is a yet more accomplished master in



the art of brag, while invoking heaven and earth to say if he have need to brag. His self-asserting speeches run over with such recurring phrases as, "Should I then boast?" "Far then from me be ostentation." "I could tell the world" this, that, and the other,

"If I would brag. Should I, that have the power  
To teach the neighbour world humility,  
Mix with vainglory? Did I but take delight  
To stretch my deeds as others do, on words,  
I could amaze my hearers. . . .  
But he shall wrong his and my modesty,  
That thinks me apt to boast. After an act  
Fit for a god to do upon his foe,  
A little glory in a soldier's mouth  
Is well becoming; be it far from vain."

Don Quixote, perceiving that he had attracted the attention of the traveller in green, and being the pink of courtesy and always desirous of pleasing, anticipated his questions by an announcement of name, style, and achievements; ending his speech with the apologetic assurance, "Though self-praise depreciates, I am compelled sometimes to pronounce my own commendations, but it is only when no friend is present to perform that office for me."

The once widely popular as well as highly patronized author of *Wild Oats*, vindicates the right, nay duty, of blowing one's own trumpet; as author, he speaks in a metrical preface:—

"Ere Roman triumph was decreed,  
The victor for himself must plead,  
And tell the when, the where, and how  
He won the laurel for his brow:  
Though for ourselves the trump we blow,  
That duty to ourselves we owe."

George Wither's kindest critic, the most genial and most congenial of them all, defines what that poet calls his *Motto* to be a continued self-eulogy of two thousand

lines, which, however, we read to the end without any feeling of distaste, almost without a consciousness that we have been listening all the while to a man praising himself—there being in it none of the “cold particles, the hardness and self-ends, which render vanity and egotism hateful.” He seems, says Elia, to be praising another person, under the mask of self; or rather, we feel that it was indifferent to him where he found the virtue which he celebrates; whether another’s bosom or his own were its chosen receptacle. This is self-praise with a difference; the Non-Ego commingled and confounded with the Ego, after approved Teutonic fashion.

Self-depreciation was not the foible of the Earl of Leicester, Elizabeth’s Earl; witness the “most ingenuous reference to himself,” as Mr. Motley calls it, in the Leicester correspondence in 1586, relating to Zutphen: “In my former letters I forgot *one*, who not only on that day but at every day’s service, hath been a *principal actor himself*. *A tall, wise, rare servant he is*, as I know, and of marvellous good government and judgment. That gentleman may take a great charge upon him, I warrant you.” John Foster’s apology would never seem to come amiss to such as need it, if put upon their defence: he writes to the Rev. Joseph Hughes, “If you are beginning to say, ‘Let another praise thee, and not thyself,’ I may ask whether it should not be an excepted case where that ‘other’ has not sense to see anything in me to praise.” An excepted case: every man is willing enough to make his own case an exception, and to let the exception prove the rule.

The rule is a proved and approved one, by all the world. The exception, by the individual claimant in particular. His personal and perhaps peremptory claim abates not in the least his adhesion to the proverb of King Solomon and to the counsel of Sir Matthew Hale

to his children, which runs : " Be careful that you do not commend yourselves. It is a sign that your reputation is small and sinking if your own tongue must praise you ; and it is fulsome and displeasing to others to hear such commendations." But, for all that, the worldly-wise insist, with a good show of reason, upon the value of a little timely and resolute self-assertion. We accept every person in the world as that for which he gives himself out, says Goethe, only he must give himself out for something ; we can put up with the unpleasant more easily than we can tolerate the insignificant. When Sir Charles Dazzle, in Reynolds' comedy, bids Pavè speak highly of his patron, " Ay, and of myself too, Sir Charles," says the other ; " for, in this unthinking age, say you're a clever fellow, and everybody believes it—they remember they heard you praised, and forget where." A lady-novelist assures us that many moderately good-looking women reign as beauties by reason of the firm faith they manifest in their own superiority of personal appearance : faith is contagious ; and what the possessor so evidently believes in, the world feels must exist. Monsieur Rigaud is said to have had a certain air of being a handsome man—which he was not ; and a certain air of being a well-bred man—which he was not : it was mere swagger and challenge ; but in this particular, as in many others, blustering assertion goes for proof, half the world over. " Even beauty," remarks an essayist on tacit dictation, " is rarely fully recognized if its possessor is either unable or unwilling to act the part." As in the case of the precious metals, nature supplies the material, but before it can be used as current coin each man must stamp it with his own impress in a mint of his own, and those who are richest in bullion are by no means always best provided with the machinery required for coining it,—for making current

coin of it. Thus qualities which their owner does not in a manner announce, will generally not be recognized at all. "Those who are best entitled to deference or admiration often prefer to preserve their incognito in general society, but that the power of making them is a valuable one is not the less true." Aristotle's consummate character does not think too highly of himself; but it is equally his duty not to think of himself too meanly: "he will not assert himself too much, but he will be just as careful not to assert himself too little." The golden mean, according to the great Greek political philosopher, consists in thoroughly knowing what one is really worth, and in "bearing oneself accordingly." In his tractate on *Right of Precedence*, Swift would on no account have the young men he is counselling underrate themselves, for that is the ready way, he reckons, to be despised by others; and the consequences of contempt are fatal. For his part, the sarcastic Dean takes self-conceit and self-assertion to be of all others the most useful and profitable of characteristics: witness the bishops, and judges, and smart writers, and pretty fellows, and pleasant companions, and good preachers, that, to his knowledge, have been made thereby. In his *Tale of a Tub* he professes to have been often told in confidence by Dryden, that the world would never have suspected him to be so great a poet, if he had not assured them of it so frequently in his prefaces that by no possibility could they either doubt or forget it. What Pope Englishes from Homer—

"A just proportion of refulgent brass,"

is of main importance on the forehead, as well as for the mouthpiece, of him who blows his own trumpet. Men of no more than ordinary discernment never, according to Adam Smith, rate any man higher than he appears to rate himself: he seems doubtful, they say, whether



he is perfectly fit for such a situation or such an office, and immediately they give the preference to some impudent blockhead, who entertains no doubt about his own qualifications, and who sounds his own praises in the most resonant of sounding brass.

"'T would take a Byron and a Scott, I tell ye,  
Rolled up in one, to make a Pat O'Kelly !"

Doubtless such was the honest conviction of the Irish rhapsodist ; and if so, Father Prout pleads for him, he had an undeniable right to put his opinion on record, and publish it to the world. Chateaubriand cites applaudingly the custom of the Spartans to vaunt in public their individual prowess—as thinking that the man who praises himself in the face of the world, enters into an engagement to deserve the praise ; and thus would the distinguished *Voyageur en Amérique* explain and justify the excess of self-assertion on the part of the redskin chiefs. Of America herself it was some years ago remarked by an eminent writer, that having had her way to make in the world, self-assertion had been in her case a national necessity ; she could not afford to be troubled with any inconvenient modesty ; it might be all very well for old countries, with established reputations,\* to be unobtrusive and reserved ; but young people, she

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\* Writing about the Danes in 1863, a Saturday Reviewer ascribed to them, as to the Greeks, the peculiar patriotism of a small nation—of a nation which holds itself to have been somewhat snubbed and ill-treated. A patriotism of this kind, he observed, is self-conscious and self-asserting ; it is always thinking of itself, and thinking what other people will think of it. The same sort of feeling he discerns in Scotchmen and Irishmen, as opposed to Englishmen, and, in a somewhat different form, in Americans also. "The Americans indeed are not a small people in the sense in which Greece or Denmark is small, but they are a new people, who still have, in some sort, to make their way in the world," etc.—*Sat. Rev.*, xv. 432.

knew, must sound their trumpet pretty loud if they mean to get on. So America made no secret of her merits: "Si quid honesti est Jactat et ostendit;" and so long had she been accustomed, said her critic, to showing cause why she should be reckoned a great nation, that "she goes on showing cause long after she had gained a verdict." One of the apophthegms of Owen Meredith in *The Artist*, is—

"Assert thyself; and by and by

The world will come and lean on thee."

There is no harm in being respected in this world, Samuel Titmarsh professes to have found out; and if you don't brag a little for yourself, "depend on it there is no person of your acquaintance who will tell the world of your merits, and take the trouble off your hands." Another shrewd authority shrewdly suspects that the majority of Englishmen measure a man by his own standard: they take you at your own word, and do not think highly of you unless you seem to think highly of yourself. "Insolent swagger and self-conceit will not of course go down, but a certain flavour of sober self-esteem has a wonderful effect upon the general public. If you are deferential, it is probable that a stranger will condemn you as a humbug. If you are retiring and modest, many will consider you effeminate and sneaking." Pretence is ever bad, remarks the author of *The Original*; but there are many who obscure their good qualities by a certain carelessness, or even an affected indifference; and the man who conceals or disguises his merit, and yet expects to have credit for it, "might as well expect to be thought clean in his person, if he chose to go covered with filthy rags." The world, we are emphatically warned, will not, and in great measure cannot, but judge by appearances, and worth must stamp itself, if it hopes to pass current even against baser metal.

"Self-love, my liege, is not so vile a sin  
As self-neglecting."

the French king is admonished by the more spirited dauphin in Shakspeare's *King Henry V.* The French Shakspeare, if Corneille be he, cannot be taxed with neglect of the admonition. Like his heroes, this dramatic Peter the Great, *ce grand Pierre*, talked in as tall talk of himself as he thought, and accepted as his simple due the profoundest and profusest homage that was paid him in his prime :

"Je sais ce que je vaux, et crois ce qu'on m'en dit."

Paracelsus began his professional career by burning publicly, in his class-room, the works of Galen and Avicenna, assuring his hearers that the strings of his shoes possessed more knowledge than those two medical Sir Oracles. All the universities united had not, he assured his pupils, as much knowledge as was contained in his own beard, and the hairs upon his head were better informed than all the writers that ever existed put together. French historians admire the reply of Duguesclin to his captor the Black Prince when contemptuously, or at least slightly, as if to show indifference, asked to fix his own ransom : "Not less than a hundred thousand francs," amazed the prince into exclaiming, "Where will you get them, Bertrand?" And Bertrand replied that the King of Castile would pay one half, the King of France the other; and if that were not enough, not a Frenchwoman able to spin but would ply her distaff for his ransom. "He did not presume beyond his value," Michelet says.

"We all do stamp our value on ourselves ;

The price we challenge for ourselves is given us,"

quoth Butler in *Wallenstein*. Not to speak roundly of a man's self, implies, in Montaigne's estimate, some want of courage. A firm and lofty judgment, sound and

sure in its judging, makes use of one's own example, says he, upon all occasions, as readily as those of others, and gives evidence as freely of oneself as of a third person. Montaigne accounts it to be, indeed, equally a fault not to discern how far a man's worth extends, and to claim more than a man discovers in himself. Considering Benvenuto Cellini's exuberance of self-assertion, who would have looked for a rebuke from *his* lips, of all men, on Sansovino, for boasting at his own table of his own achievements in Art? "I was so disgusted at this behaviour," protests Cellini, "that I did not eat one morsel with appetite. I only took the liberty to express my sentiments thus: 'Signor Giacompo, . . . men of genius who distinguish themselves by their works, are much better known by the commendations of others, than by vainly sounding their own praises.'" Cellini's own trumpet for self-praise was of triple trombone size and power and tone. It is as different as well can be from what Professor Masson terms that "vein of noble egotism, of unbashful self-assertion," which runs throughout the *opera (necnon opuscula) omnia* of Milton—a particular form of self-esteem in keeping with his moral austerity of character. The dread felt by Robert Burns of anything approaching to meanness or servility is said to have rendered his manner somewhat hard and decided, when associating with the "gentry." There appeared, as Dr. Currie describes it, in his first manner and address perfect ease and self-possession, but a stern and almost supercilious elevation, not indeed incompatible with openness and affability, which however bespoke a mind conscious of superior talents. "Only be sure that you really can stand up stoutly for yourself," urges the counsellor of *Friends in Council*, when cautioning a simple-minded relative that friends are not all-potent for good, and that a man's friend may be ill, or travelling, or



shelved, "but good self-assurance is always within call." What a man has to do in society, is to assert himself, Mr. Thackeray affirms; and he felicitates the purchaser of that volume of his which enunciates the maxim, on having made a bargain, and put out his money well, if he will but lay the maxim to heart, and follow it through life. M. Cuvillier Fleury owns to having once been of the same mind with Eugène Delacroix, whom he heard say, once upon a time, that a man should never talk about himself, whether good or bad—the good is not believed, and the bad *is*. But the critic changed his view, after certain experiences in literature and life, and he then formally avowed his conviction of the utility of talking about oneself. Self-praise he found to have the same fortune sometimes as running down another man. Calumniate! for some of the calumny is sure to stick. Brag of yourself, boldly, vigorously, persistently,—and the world will, in the end, *bon gré, mal gré*, come round to your opinion.

There is a popular essay concerning the world's opinion, the clerical author of which remonstrates with the puny pitiful people who appear to be always apologizing for venturing to be in this world at all; and as this is a painful and degrading point to arrive at, so is it also, he contends, a morally wrong one,—implying, as it does, a forgetfulness of "Who put you in this world, that you should wish to skulk through it in that fashion." The Creator put you here, he argues, in a lowly place indeed, but giving you as good a right in it, in your own place in it, as to Queen or Emperor. To systematically and superlatively disparage oneself, by no means implies a conscientious and genuine observance of the precept against self-praise. Rather it indicates in many cases a craving for contradiction, the flatter the better. La Bruyère calls *la fausse modestie le dernier raffinement de*

*la vanité.* To apply a subtle comment of Shakspeare's Angelo,—

“ Thus wisdom wishes to appear most bright,  
When it doth tax itself : as these black masks  
Proclaim an enshield beauty ten times louder  
Than beauty could, displayed.”

They who do speak ill of themselves, do so mostly, says Julius Hare, as the surest way of proving how modest and candid they are. A North British divine cites applaudingly the case of the weaver in a Scottish village, who prayed daily and fervently for a better opinion of himself ; so great a help in life is a firm conviction of one's own importance. Emerson professes to have known a man who, in a certain religious exaltation, “thought it an honour to wash his own face,”—and who seemed to the Essayist more sane than those who hold themselves cheap. Goethe's Arkas, in the *Iphigenia*, can forgive, though he must needs deplore, the pride that underrates itself ; yet anon he demands of the priestess,—

“ Him dost thou praise who underrates his deeds ?  
*Iph.* Who highly rates his deeds is justly blamed.  
*Ark.* We blame alike who proudly disregard  
Their genuine merit, and who vainly prize  
Their spurious worth too highly.”

*Neque culpa neque lauda teipsum* is a wholesome maxim, in deprecation of the morbid egotism which prompts a man to make himself out either better or worse than he is. Speaking of some characters he had met with who greatly distrusted their capacity, and were inclined to think they did nothing well, and who were perfectly justified in that opinion, M. de Tocqueville remarks, “ The truth is, that great self-confidence and great self-distrust proceed from the same source, an extreme desire to shine, which prevents men from judging themselves calmly and temperately.” Swift is caustic on the general fault in conversation of those who habitually talk

of themselves—and the particular one of making a vanity of telling their own faults: they cannot dissemble, forsooth; there is something in their nature that abhors insincerity; with many other insufferable topics of the same altitude. “Of such mighty importance every man is to himself, and ready to think he is to others.” Apology is only egotism wrong side out, quoth the American Professor at the Breakfast-table, who holds that nine times out of ten, the first thing a man’s companion knows of his shortcomings is from his deprecating flourish about them. “It is mighty presumptuous on your part to suppose your small failures of so much consequence that you must make a talk about them.” An essayist on False Shame has no hope for the man who after twenty, or at latest twenty-five, will harp in all companies on his red hair, or be perpetually reminding people that he is little, or embarrass them by allusions to his plebeian origin, or be making absurd apologies for his relations, or depreciate the dinner he has set before his guests,—for he fails in the quality which defies and puts to flight false shame; and that is manliness: the fears, flusters, and perturbations of *mauvaise honte* are asserted to be a sign of some inherent discrepancy between his intellect (however acute) and his moral nature, which will always keep him immature. Self-valuation, observes Shaftesbury in the *Characteristics*, supposes self-worth; and in a person conscious of real worth, is either no pride, or a just and noble one. In the same manner, self-contempt “supposes a self-meanness or defectiveness; and may be either a just modesty or unjust humility.” Butler reckons it

“ — a harder thing for men to rate  
 Their own parts at an equal estimate,  
 Than cast up fractions in the account of heaven,  
 Of time and motion, and adjust them even :

For modest persons never had a true  
Particular of all that is their due."

Dryden, again, is concerned with the fairer side of self-disparagement in his panegyric of the Countess of Abingdon—

"She was not humble, but Humility.  
Scarcely she knew that she was great, or fair,  
Or wise, beyond what other women are . . .  
But still she found, or rather thought she found,  
Her own worth wanting, others' to abound ;  
Ascribed above their due to every one,  
Unjust and scanty to herself alone."

But Dryden could shrewdly enough discern the other side of the impugned quality ; and he winds up his *Essay on Satire* with the self-applied reflection, touching himself as author and satirist, —

"How vain a thing is man, and how unwise !  
E'en he, who would himself the most despise.  
I, who so wise and humble seem to be,  
Now my own pride and vanity can't see."

One of the tricks of his craft is exposed or expounded by the accomplished grandson and namesake of Glorious John's Achitophel, who describes such a peculiar grace and ingenuity in the approved method of avowing laziness, precipitancy, carelessness, or whatever other vices have been the occasion of an author's deficiency, that "it would seem a pity had the work itself been brought to such perfection as to have left no room for the penitent party to enlarge on his own demerits. For from the multiplicity of these, he finds subject to ingratiate himself with his reader; who doubtless is not a little raised by this submission of a confessing author."\* There is, says Wordsworth,

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\* Some authors, as the Earl of Chesterfield tells his son, have criticized their own works first, in hopes of hindering others from doing it afterwards,—and more efficiently.



“—— a luxury in self-dispraise ;  
And inward self-disparagement affords  
To meditative spleen a grateful feast.”

But the inward sort is not very common. Its outward manifestations run through a whole gamut of notes. A sententious philosopher has affirmed that, as the man who displays his own merit is a coxcomb, so the man who does not know it is a fool :—the man of sense knows it, exerts it, avails himself of it, but never boasts of it ; and always *seems* rather to under than over-value it ; though, in truth, he sets the right value upon it. La Bruyère's maxim is therefore to the purpose, “qu'on ne vaut dans ce monde, que ce que l'on veut valoir.” To the man who underrates himself, says Adam Smith, we seldom fail to do, at least, all the injustice which he does to himself, and frequently a great deal more. “In almost all cases, it is better to be a little too proud than, in any respect, too humble ; and, in the sentiment of self-estimation, some degree of excess seems, both to the person himself and to the impartial spectator, to be less disagreeable than any degree of defect.” To the person himself—because he is not only, on Doctor Adam's showing, more unhappy in his own feelings than either the proud or the vain, but is much more liable to ill-usage from other people. Johnson advised Boswell not to speak depreciatingly of himself : the world will repeat the evil report, and make no allowance for the source. Henry Crabb Robinson in his old age put a *Nota bene* against this bit of advice, in his Diary : “It would have been well for me had I distinctly recognized this truth before. It is too late for me now to change my practice.” Dr. John Moore, in one of his letters to Burns, congratulates him on his manifest disdain of the “nauseous affectation of decrying your own merit as a poet,” an affectation which is displayed with most ostentation, the

author of *Zeluco* can testify, by those who have the greatest share of self-conceit, and which only adds undeceiving falsehood to disgusting vanity. Burns himself, a year later, in a letter to another correspondent, insists on the rights and duties of manly self-assertion, founded on self-knowledge, not self-conceit,—“the honest justice,” he calls it, that a man of sense, who has thoroughly examined the subject, owes to himself. “Without this standard, this column in our own mind, we are perpetually at the mercy of the petulance, the mistakes, the prejudices, nay, the very weakness and wickedness of our fellow-creatures.” *Le prix que nous valons, qui le sait mieux que nous?* is Corneille’s candid inquiry. Common-sense commentators on the text which says that the meek shall inherit the earth, point out the existence of two sorts of meekness; of which the desirable one does not mean an unreasonable disparagement of our own powers or merits in favour of those of other people, or a humble fetching and carrying in obedience to the views and feelings of indifferent persons. We find Byron assuring his “dear Moore,” in 1813, that he strangely underrates himself. “I should conceive it an affectation in any other; but I think I know you well enough to believe that you don’t know your own value. However, ’tis a fault that generally mends, and, in your case, it really ought.” Months later the noble lord renews the protest: “I see in you what I never saw in poet before, a strange diffidence of your own powers, which I cannot account for.” De Quincey noted as specially characteristic of Charles Lamb an absolute abhorrence of all affectation, which showed itself in self-disparagement of every kind; never the mock disparagement which is self-praise in an indirect form, as when people accuse themselves of all the virtues, by professing an inability to pay proper attention to prudence

or economy—or an uncontrollable disposition to be rash and inconsiderate on behalf of a weaker party when suffering apparent wrong. “Lamb’s confessions of error, of infirmity, were never at any time acts of mock humility, meant to involve oblique compliment in the rebound.” Ellesmere slashes away at the class of “dreadfully humble people” who make immense claims at the very time they are explaining that they have no claims; and milder Milverton owns that they do make their humility somewhat obnoxious. Real humility, says Sir Henry Taylor, will not teach us any undue severity, but “truthfulness” in self-judgment. “My son, glorify thy soul in meekness, and give it honour according to the dignity thereof,” is the counsel of the Son of Sirach; for undue self-abasement and self-distrust will impair the strength and independence of the mind, which, if accustomed to have a just satisfaction with itself where it may, will the better bear to probe itself, and will lay itself open with the more fortitude to intimations of its weakness on points in which it stands truly in need of correction. “No humility is thoroughly sound which is not thoroughly truthful.” It is charged against the man who brings misdirected or inflated accusations against himself, that he does so in a false humility, and will probably be found to indemnify himself on one side or another:—either he takes a pride in his supposed humility or, escaping in his self-condemnations from the darker into the lighter shades of his life and nature, he “plays at hide-and-seek with his conscience.” A humble man, as Sir James Stephen defines him, is one who, thinking of himself neither more highly nor more lowly than he ought to think, passes a true judgment on his own character. And in reference to the great Benedictine, Mabillon, bearing himself among men of title and learning as if undeserving

of their notice, and unworthy to communicate with them on equal terms, our ecclesiastical essayist affirms that genuine self-abasement there cannot be apart from a lofty conception of our own destiny, powers, and responsibilities ; and holds an abject carriage to be but a poor expression of one of the most excellent of human virtues, which, in its genuine state, will ever impart elevation to the soul and dignity to the demeanour. M. Necker thought it one of the most difficult of delicate questions to attain to a just estimate of one's self : " Les hommes qui ont une parfaite opinion d'eux-mêmes sont des heureux ridicules. Les hommes qui se querellent sans cesse sont des infortunés estimables. On observe difficilement un juste milieu. Il faudrait se regarder à distance et se juger sans amour, sans aigreur, et comme une simple connaissance."\* As we probably do mischief if we overrate our powers, so, if we under-estimate ourselves, we fail to do the good we might. A Christian who humbly feels that he is only an unprofitable servant before God, may at the same time be conscious of his profitableness to his fellow-men. There is a recipe of Mr. Charles Reade's prescribing, which runs to this effect :—To know people's real estimate of themselves, study their language of self-depreciation. If, even when they undertake to lower themselves, they cannot help insinuating self-praise, be sure their humility is a puddle, their vanity is a well. Hartley Coleridge reckons it hard to praise another with a manly grace, still harder to praise one's self,—but to dispraise one's self in a becoming manner,† the hardest of all.

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\* M. Sainte-Beuve maliciously remarks, that even in judging himself after this manner and in the light of "a simple acquaintance," M. Necker was never out of humour with himself—*n'ait jamais été mécontent de lui.*

† Mr. Trollope explains his Clara Amedroz (in the *Belton Estate*)



Let another man praise thee. But how much depends on who and what that other man is! The man whose praise one would covet, is the man who himself is a signal object of praise, and cordially respected as praiseworthy. *Laudari à laudate*,—that is praise worth the having. La Bruyère may well say that princes bepraised without end by grandees and courtiers would be very much more vain than they are, if they could but know the praisers to be themselves a little more praiseworthy. Shakspeare distinguishes Cassibelan, in *Cymbeline*, as

“Famous in Cæsar’s praises, no whit less  
Than in his feats deserving it.”

Addison’s Juba declares of Cato,

“—— I’d rather have that man  
Approve my deeds, than worlds for my admirers.”

To be commended by those who themselves deserve to be commended, and for things commendable in themselves, Chesterfield pronounces the greatest pleasure anybody can feel. “When he whom everybody else flatters, flatters me, I then,” said Johnson, “am truly happy.” The learned Germans who resorted to Rome that they might converse with Clavius, had a trick of saying that they would rather be attacked by him than praised by any one else. What then must the praise of Clavius have been to them! Pope’s answer to those who would cross-examine him as to the why and wherefore of his continued authorship, was, that well-natured Garth inflamed him with early praise, that Congreve loved and Swift endured his lays; that even

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to have called herself ordinary with that half-insincere depreciation of self which is common to all of us when we speak of our own attributes, but which we by no means intend that they who hear us shall accept as strictly true, or shall re-echo as their own approved opinion.

mitred Rochester would nod his head in approval, and accomplished St. John with open arms welcome one poet more :

“Happy my studies, when by these approved !  
 Happier their author, when by these beloved !  
 From these the world will judge of men and books,  
 Not from the Burnets, Oldmixons, and Cooks.”

The second line may remind us of the aspiration of M. J. Chenier, in his satire *Sur la Calomnie* :

“Moi, qui, pour tout trésor, ne voudrais obtenir  
 Que d'être aimé de ceux qu'aimera l'avenir.”

Gibbon avows in his Autobiography that, when present at the “august spectacle of Mr. Hastings in Westminster Hall,” and a delighted listener to “Mr. Sheridan’s eloquence,” he could not hear without emotion the personal compliment which the orator paid him\* in the presence of the British nation. The rational pride of an author, said Gibbon in another place, may be offended, rather than flattered, by vague indiscriminate praise ; but he cannot, nor should he, be indifferent to the fair testimonies of private and public esteem. Thackeray quotes the eulogy passed by Gibbon on *Tom Jones*, and his prediction of its enduring vitality, as the sentence not to be gainsaid of a great judge ; for, to have your name mentioned by Gibbon “is like having it written on the dome of St. Peter’s. Pilgrims from all the world admire and behold it.” Hood dedicated his *Hero and Leander* to Coleridge, in a copy of verses of which this is the *terminus ad quem* :

“But I am thirsty for thy praise, for when  
 We gain applauses from the great in name,  
 We seem to be partakers of *their* fame.”

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\* But which the quizzical orator affected afterwards to explain away, by resolving, or expanding and diluting, the “luminous page of Gibbon” into vo-luminous.

Leigh Hunt, too, wrote his *Hero and Leander*; and great *kudos* he thought it when told of Wordsworth taking down the poem from a bookseller's shelf, to show some persons present how swimming ought to be described. And of another of his works he tells a friend that Wordsworth's expression of a regard for them—"no *habit*, you know, of his, towards my verses"—gave him what he is pleased to call "a kind of sneaking satisfaction," and a "shabby pleasure," but what was evidently above the sneaking or shabby stage, and was to Leontius a thing to boast of and a joy for ever. Clarkson Stanfield, in a letter of thanks to Etty for spontaneous praise of one of his pictures, says: "There is nothing so gratifying to the feelings of a painter as the praise of his brothers in the art, . . . and 'approbation from Sir Hubert Stanley is praise indeed.'" The one passage or phrase that is still remembered in Morton's once popular, and not even yet entirely shelved, comedy of *A Cure for the Heartache* is, "Praise from Sir Hubert Stanley"—which has passed into a proverb, though very few, probably, are aware of its derivation.

When Garrick, from the stage, saw Pope in a side box, viewing him with a serious and minute attention, the poet's look shot and thrilled like lightning through the actor's frame, and the latter had some hesitation in proceeding, from anxiety and from joy. But when, as Richard gradually blazed forth, (Richard himself again,) and the house was in a roar of applause, and "the conspiring hand of Pope" showered him with laurels, well might young David's heart leap; for he worshipped genius, and here was come, in intent to judge him, in effect to applaud him, the most notable man of his time. Young Miss Hannah More might well stare, as she says she did, with incredulous delight, when Dr. Johnson praised her *Bas bleu* with an effusion of flattery out-

doing all she had ever received before, all put together : " This from Johnson, that parsimonious praiser ! I told him I was delighted at his approbation ; he answered quite characteristically : ' And so you may, for I give you the opinion of a man who does not rate his judgment in these things very low, I can tell you.' " It was a crisis, a turning-point, in the career of Robert Burns, when a letter of admiration from Dr. Blacklock opened new prospects to his poetic ambition ; for " the Doctor belonged to a set of critics for whose applause I had not dared to hope." Professor Wilson's praise, " not conveyed in scanty driblets," was gratefully recognized by struggling and aspiring members of his class, as equal to a house or estate. As dear to poor scholars at the time as to Rinaldo that of the preux chevalier, whose " sweet words and praises soft," so made his heart rejoice, the more that " well he knew, though much he praised him, all his words were true," and for which he returned thanks as became giver and receiver,

" For much it glads me that my power and might  
Ypraisèd is by such a valiant knight."

The heart hardly deserves praise, that is not fond of it from the worthy, muses the Honourable Miss Byron in Richardson's novel. Sir William Jones opines that—

" Praise, of which virtuous minds may boast,  
They best confer, who merit most."

And Miss Byron aforesaid, towards the end of her almost endless history, discovers a new and keener delight in the *laudari à laudato*, when the praiser is not only a Sir Charles Grandison, but her own Sir Charles, the nearest to her and the dearest of all human beings : " I thought at the time I had a foretaste of the joys of heaven. How sweet is the incense of praise from a husband ; that husband a good man ; my surrounding friends



enjoying it!" Praise from Sir Hubert Stanley, — the adage is a trifle musty; praise from Sir Charles Grandison may be grander still; but the praise lavished by Sir Charles on Lady Grandison must be *plus ultra*, or *ne plus*.

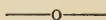
Dr. Johnson was delighted when Boswell repeated to him what Orme, the historian of Hindostan, had said of him—how Orme loved better to hear him talk than anybody else, whatever the subject, etc. Because the praise came from a man so respected, it was of high account with the great man praised. And we may be sure that Boswell repeated the eulogy all the more eagerly, that a week before he had sensibly gratified his big friend by telling him what Dunning had just said,—“One is always willing to listen to Dr. Johnson.” “That is a great deal from you, sir,” had been Boswell’s remark to Dunning; and Johnson now agreed, “Yes, sir, a great deal indeed. Here is a man willing to listen, to whom the world is listening all the rest of the year.” And when Boswell hoped and believed it to be right to tell one man of such a handsome thing, said of him by another, as tending to increase benevolence,—“Undoubtedly it is right, sir,” was the doctor’s decisive reply.

To some natures—not the more vulgar—no praise is nearly so dear as that which comes from lips endeared by relationship or friendship. Johnson related to Boswell, “with amiable fondness,”—he was ever tender to Jetty—the story of his wife’s gratified pride in *The Rambler*, and his in hers. Distant praise, from whatever quarter, his faithful biographer reflects, is not so delightful as that of a beloved and esteemed wife: “Her approbation may be said to ‘come home to his bosom;’ and being so near, its effect is most sensible and permanent.” We find Washington Irving in his fortieth year writing to his sister, Mrs. Paris, “how heartfelt is my gratification at finding you and my dear sister Sally

expressing a pride in what I have done, and in what others say of me. Believe me, my dear sister, the fondest wish of my heart will be gratified if I can enjoy the affection of my relatives while living, and leave a name that may be cherished by the family when my poor wandering life is at an end." Pretty is the picture in Longfellow's New England hexameters, of Priscilla the spinner, rejoicing in the good word of John Alden—

"Straight uprose from her wheel the beautiful Puritan maiden,  
Pleased with the praise of her thrift from him whose praise was  
the sweetest."

Oh! music of music,—so the author of *Christie Johnstone* apostrophizes praise from eloquent lips, and those lips, the lips we love. The best of our resolutions, writes Henry Mackenzie, are bettered by a consciousness of the suffrage of good men in their favour; and the reward is still higher when that suffrage is from those we love.



## XXIX.

### FRIENDLY WOUNDS.

PROVERBS xxvii. 6.

THE wounds wherewith one has been wounded in the house of one's friends, are the cruellest of all, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the joints and marrow, and of soul and spirit; for a spirit so wounded who can bear? But then the friends in such a case are false friends. Let the friend but be a true one,—loyal, single-minded, single-hearted, simply sincere,—and then "faithful are the wounds of a friend." A man that is a friend must show himself friendly, and even in wounding he can do so. He must be just the reverse of the satirist Atticus,

"Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike."

He must not fear to deal the necessary stroke, while yet it goes utterly against his heart to wound, and it would torture himself to give needless pain. He is not one of the "righteous" sort against whose "wickedness" the psalmist prays, if at least we take the Prayer-Book version: "Let the righteous rather smite me friendly and reprove me, but let not their precious balms break my head: yea, I will pray yet against their wickedness." Whereas the Bible version has it: "Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil which shall not break my head." That this verse has been generally misunderstood Hengstenberg takes some pains to show; but the literal rectification of its import need not here detain us.

It is not, indeed, the office of a friend, as Jeremy Taylor says, always to be sour, or at any time morose; but free, open, and ingenuous, candid and humane, "not denying to please, but ever refusing to abuse or corrupt." He is a miserable man, declares the silver-tongued prelate in another place, whom none dares tell of his faults so plainly that he may understand his danger; and he that is incapable and impatient of reproof, can never become a good friend to any man—will "never admonish his friend when he sins, and if he would, why should not himself be glad of the same charity?" A prominent theist of our day has remarked of the promptness of the rebukes of Christ, that the attachment of His hearers was probably strengthened thereby rather than weakened, since the rebukes were delivered with that frankness of speech which causes men not so much to feel hurt by the severity of the reproof, as interested by the pointed application of it, and conciliated by the evident absence of malignant intentions.

Whatever she may have become afterwards, Queen

Elizabeth does appear to have been faithfully the friend of Mary Stuart when she thus appealed to her after the Darnley catastrophe, but before the damning contents of the casket letters were known abroad : " Oh, Madam, I should ill fulfil the part either of a faithful cousin or of an affectionate friend, if I were to content myself with saying pleasant things to you and made no effort to preserve your honour. . . . You may have wiser councillors than I am—I can well believe it . . . while I am sure that you have no friend more true than I." Supposing the Queen of Scots to have been really free from the deepest shade of guilt, her warmest well-wisher could not, Mr. Froude affirms, have written more kindly or advised her more judiciously than Elizabeth did. Five months later, the Queen of England thus began a despatch to Mary in reference to her ill-starred marriage with Bothwell : " Madam, it hath been always held for a special principle in friendship, that prosperity provideth, but adversity proveth friends ; wherefore . . . we have thought meet . . . in these few words to testify our friendship, not only by admonishing you of the worst, but also to comfort you for the best." Two things, according to Dr. South, are required in him that shall undertake to reprove another ; a confidence in, and a kindness to the person whom he reproves ; both which qualifications are eminently to be found in every real friend. For in whom should a man confide, if not in himself ? and to whom should he be kind, if not to himself ? and is it not a saying as true as it is common, that every friend is another self ? But is it possible, the old divine goes on to ask, " that that man should truly love me that leaves me unguarded and unassisted, when the weakness and inadvertency of my own mind would expose me, with all my indecencies and imperfections, to the observation and derision of the world ? No ; it



is the nature of love to 'cover a multitude of sins;' which are by no way so effectually concealed and covered from the eyes of others, as by being faithfully discovered and laid open to him who commits them." The true friend, it is argued, resolves to do the part of a friend, though his very doing so makes him forfeit his being thought so.

Aurora Leigh welcomes the "blame of love" as "sweeter than all praise of those who love not." In a more than usually affectionate letter of Arbuthnot's to Swift, the genial M.D. tells the ungenial D.D., in answer to his melancholy intimations of parting and estrangement, that while he is sure he can never forget Dr. Swift until he shall meet with (what is impossible) another in whose conversation he can delight so much, yet is that the smallest thing he values him for: the hearty sincerity of friendship, the plain and open ingenuousness of his character, is what he is sure he never can find in another. "Alas! I shall often want a faithful monitor, one that would vindicate me behind my back, and tell me my faults to my face. God knows I write this with tears in my eyes." How very much less apt would the Dean of St. Patrick's have been to welcome a friendly fault-finder! Hard work it had been to bring down that haughty spirit to the forgiving docility invited by Dr. Young,—

"Let thy pride pardon, what thy nature needs,  
The salutary censure of a friend."

"When a man is to be amended," says Edmund Burke, and by amendment to be preserved, "it becomes the office of a friend to urge his faults and vices with all the energy of enlightened affection, to paint them in their most vivid colours, and to bring the moral patient to a better habit." The duties of Friendship, as expounded by Thomas Brown in one of his ethical lectures, are shown to include the difficult one of dealing with a friend's

“moral imperfections,”—such as, slight at first, may, if suffered to continue, vitiate the whole character. “The correction of these is our chief duty; and every effort which it is in our power to use for this moral emendation, is to be employed sedulously, anxiously, urgently; but with all the tenderness which such efforts admit.” The error is not his alone, we are warned, if the mode of remonstrance is calculated to offend—if we make him feel more his own imperfection than the tenderness of that regard which seeks his amendment above every other object. The poets, in the language of Goethe’s Tasso,—

“The poets tell us of a magic spear,  
Which could, by friendly contact, heal the wound  
Itself had giv’n. The tongue hath such a power.”

St. Paul, though he made the Corinthians sorry with a letter, did not repent, but rather rejoiced, because they were made sorry after a godly sort, and felt that faithful were the wounds of such a friend. He asked the Galatians, “Am I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?” Only a feeble pretender to friendship will flatter at all costs, and abstain with selfish timidity from ever hinting a fault, or pointing out an inconsistency :

“Careless how ill I with myself agree,  
Kind to my dress, my figure, not to Me.  
Is this my guide, philosopher, and friend?  
This he who loves me, and who ought to mend?”

Elsewhere the same pen prescribes this couplet :

“Laugh at your friends, and if your friends are sore,  
So much the better, you may laugh the more,”

because their impatience under reproof would show how much there was in them wanting to be set right. But the wounds kept open by laughter are scarcely of the faithful sort, and the friendly, sanctioned by the proverb.

There is a general meaning beyond the particular one in George's injunction to Richard in Crabbe's *Tales of the Hall*:—

“Faults if you see, and such as must abide,  
Say they are small, or say that I can hide ;  
But faults that I can change, remove, or mend,  
These like a foe detect—or like a friend.”

Clarendon was assured by Charles the Second's Queen that “he should never be more welcome to her than when he told her of her faults ;” to which the Chancellor replied, “that it was the province he was accused of usurping with reference to all his friends.” It requires, according to Sir Philip Herne, no ordinary cast of character to enable a man to receive pain from a friend ; nor should a friend, he thinks, give it but under peculiar circumstances, and where he can at once find good qualities in the person he gives it to, and prove his own power to acknowledge faults in himself. Walpole, in one of his letters to Mason, affects, if it be affectation, to thank him for his last epistle “as the kindest possible, for you reprove me like a friend, and nothing comes so welcome to me as to be told of my faults,”—the great business of Horace's life being, by his own account, to mend as many of them as he could. When the Duke in *Twelfth Night* asks Festo, Olivia's jester, “How dost thou, my good fellow?” and is answered, “Truly, sir, the better for my foes, and the worse for my friends,” that paradox prompts Orsino to object, “Just the contrary ; the better for thy friends.” “No, sir, the worse,” is the fool's rejoinder ; and being asked how can that be, his explanation is ready : “Marry, sir, they praise me, and make an ass of me ; now my foes tell me plainly I am an ass ; so that by my foes, sir, I profit in the knowledge of myself ; and by my friends I am abused.” To the same purport, in a more dignified

strain, is the protest of Molière's *Alceste* against the flatteries and flatterers cherished by *Célimène*, to the ignoring of those faults which *he* will not ignore :

“ Et l'on a tort ici de nourrir dans votre âme  
Ce grand attachement aux défauts qu'on y blâme.

\* \* \* \*

Plus on aime quelqu'un, moins il faut qu'on le flatte ;  
A ne rien pardonner le pur amour éclate.”

His exposition of his plain-speaking principles does indeed lay him open to *Célimène*'s sprightly retort, that, to follow out his precepts, true love ought to renounce all tenderness and amiability, and that perfect love would assert its supreme privilege and be seen to most advantage when roundly abusing, rating, scolding, and insulting the beloved object :—

“ Et du parfait amour mettre l'honneur suprême  
A bien injurier les personnes qu'on aime.”

A discriminator between impertinences and disagreeable things, observes of the former that it may or may not be true—its main design, independent of truth, is, more or less, to insult ; while of a disagreeable thing the essence is that it should be true—true in itself, or true as representing the speaker's state of feeling. “And yet an unpalatable truth is not technically a disagreeable thing, any more than an impertinence, though, of course, the being told it is an unpleasant operation. It is necessary for us, now and then, to hear unpalatable and unwelcome truths ; but a disagreeable thing is never a moral necessity—it is spoken to relieve the speaker's mind, not to profit the hearer.” There are people characterized by a certain “crude simplicity of candour,” who, as Sydney Smith complained, turn friendship into a system of lawful and unpunishable impertinence, feeling it to be a sufficient and triumphant defence of every perpetration of the sort, that it is true. It is charged,



however, against persons of this obtrusive candour that they have eyes for blemishes only, and are never impelled to tell pleasant truths—from which characteristic is inferred a predominant acerbity of temper, though their strictures may be spoken in seeming blunt, honest good humour. The Prince in the *Story of Rimini* is described as

“ —rude, sarcastic, ever in the vein  
To give the last thing he would suffer—pain.”

Hazlitt somewhere comments on the ways of a set of people who are governed by an instinct of the disagreeable, by a keen appetite for hurting other people's feelings, their own being excited and enlivened by the shock. They deal in home truths, unpleasant reflections, and unwelcome matters of fact; and the dealing is wholesale, as often as not. Mrs. Gore's Wemmersley is supremely happy when he has succeeded in inflicting pin's-point wounds on the pride of every person present in a mixed company. Those who were disposed to think the worst of the late Samuel Rogers used to say that, by the causticity of his remarks, he delighted in giving pain; though C. R. Leslie asserted, on the contrary, that by the kindness of his remarks, and still more by the kindness of his acts, what Mr. Rogers delighted in was to give pleasure. Nobody would think of bracketing the poet of the *Pleasures of Memory* with the sort of being pictured by Frédéric Soulié, into whose heart whatever joy found entrance “ne semblait pouvoir le satisfaire qu'autant qu'il en jaillirait une douleur pour un autre.” Johnson once told his fast friend, Topham Beauclerk,—fast, in the modern slang sense, as well as in the older and graver one,—that he never opened his mouth but with intention to give pain; “and you have often given me pain,” the Doctor added, “not from the power of what you said, but from seeing your intention.”

Of Johnson himself it was that the Scotch judge, Lord Hailes, comparing him with Swift, observed, that the former was a tender-hearted operator, who probed the wound only to heal it—faithful are the wounds of a friend; whereas Swift, on the other hand, mangles human nature; cutting and slashing as if he took pleasure in the operation, like the tyrant who said, *Ita feri, ut se sentiat mori*.

No man, it has been said, will own himself careless of giving pain; nobody acknowledges himself to be an habitual offender in this respect. True, there is Milla-mant in Congreve who avows pleasure at having sent away Mirabell displeased, "for I believe I gave you some pain." Mirabell asks if that pleases her. "Infinitely. I love to give pain." Why should any one take pleasure in the pain of another? is the inquiry of an essay-writer on the theme of Malice; and still more, why should any one take pleasure in inflicting pain on another? It is confessedly hard to believe that direct pleasure in the pain of another is really part of human nature; but a large class there is at least of people who, not actually delighting in the infliction of pain for its own sake, do not scruple to inflict it if it incidentally promotes their own pleasure. Mrs. Brunton tells us of her Lady Pelham in *Self-Control*, that whatever conferred the invaluable occasion of tormenting, was cherished by her as the dearest of her concerns. "Could Lady Pelham's end have been pursued without annoyance to any living being, it would long before have shared the perishable nature of her other purposes." There are people who are conscious and proud of the faculty of giving pain, who have what a dissector of their morbid anatomy calls a morbid appetite for making people uneasy about them, and to whom a comfortable person is an eyesore. Miss Martineau affirms a multi-

tude of Samuel Rogers's sayings to be rankling still in people's memories, which could not possibly have had any other origin than the love of giving pain—some being indeed so atrocious as to suggest the idea that he had a sort of psychological curiosity to see how people could bear such inflictions. The art of giving annoyance in private conversation has perhaps scarcely received the attention which it deserves—there being, as an ironical writer on the subject observes, no general theory of the best method of putting your friends out of temper, and sending them away with an acute sense of discomfiture; though it is admitted as true that some persons have reached a very high degree of skill in this line, of a purely empirical kind however,—getting to know each other's weak point, and running pins into tender places with as much discrimination as any witch-finder of former times. Young people in general, and girls in particular, are charged by essayists on social subjects with a pronounced liking for this sort of thing; there being in them an impish tendency that makes teasing a matter of exquisite delight to them: let a youngster into the secret of a weakness, a sore, or a passion, and if he can resist the temptation of torturing you as the result of his knowledge, he may lay claim to a virtue almost unknown in boyish morals. "Girls are cruel; there is no question about it. If more passive than active, they are simply indifferent to the sufferings of others; if of a more active temperament, they find a positive pleasure in giving pain. A girl will say the most cruel things to her dearest friend, and then laugh at her because she cries." The good Samaritan who poured oil upon the man's wounds is reputed better than the Levite who passed indifferently by on the other side; but the Levite is to be reputed better than one who, instead of oil, should pour in vinegar and brine.

If there be any foundation for a comparison between unpleasant truths and doses of medicine, is there, as a discourser on plain-dealing asks, to be no judgment in the times and seasons of administering them? Are we to be for ever indiscriminately physicking our friends, just because we happen to have a few spare drugs on hand, or a little spare time for dispensing them? "The simples which, on general grounds, would seem most suitable, are constantly found to disagree in particular cases." Owen Feltham, who asserts that to reprehend well is the most necessary and the hardest part of friendship, grants that there is a manner of reprehending which turns a benefit into an injury; and then, says he, it both strengthens error and wounds the giver. "It ought to be in season, neither when the brain is muddled with rising fumes, nor when the mind is maddened with ungovernable passions. Certainly, he is drunk himself that so profanes reason as to urge it to a drunken man." Tedious admonitions, he elsewhere says, at once stupify the advised, and make the giver contemptible: it is the short reproof, which stays like a stab in the memory, that tells; and oftentimes three words do more good than an idle discourse of three hours. The St. Cyran of Claude Lancelot's portraiture is a man who rebukes vice far less by stern rebuke than by the contrast of his own serene aspect. So of St. Francis Xavier we read that his very face was as a mirror reflecting by the force of contrast all the hideousness of the King of Bungo's vices; though, in this case, "faithful were the rebukes of the tongue, no less than of the countenance, of Xavier;" and it is on record that the royal offender was at length touched and awed. Feltham reckons it judicious, when dealing with one's superior, to manage reproof sometimes in parables, as Nathan to David, and so let him by the application give himself the censure.



Chaucer's model Good Parson sought to draw folk heavenward by benign teaching and good ensample:—

“But it were eny persone obstinat,  
What so he were of high or low estat,  
Him wolde he snybbe scharply for the nones,  
A bettre preest I trowe ther nowher is.”

Izaak Walton touches lovingly on Bishop Sanderson's way, as a parish priest, of begetting in offenders a devout contrition—which includes the taking them, “though never so poor,” to dinner with him, “using them friendly,” and dismissing them with his blessing, and persuasions to a virtuous life, and begging them for their own sakes to believe him. It is further noted of him that when, as proctor at Oxford, he met in his night-walk with “irregular scholars,” he would send for them next morning, and, “convinced them with such obligingness, and reason added to it, that they parted from him with such resolutions as the man after God's own heart was possessed with when he said, ‘There is mercy with Thee, and therefore Thou shalt be feared.’” He would have approved to the letter every syllable of Jeremy Taylor's injunction against a habit of reproving one's brother for everything, but for great things only; for this is the office of a tutor, not of a friend; and few men will suffer themselves to abide always under pupillage.

Every one, it has been truly said, feels how difficult it is to tell even to our nearest friends the whole truth about their faults and foibles: one wanders round and round it, nibbles at it, makes little incursions into it, then hurriedly retreats, and loses no time in enveloping oneself in a cloud of complimentary dust. “One utters a wholesome rebuke, then anxiously qualifies it—tears off the veil from hidden errors with one hand, and with the other tenderly replaces it—in short, blows hot and cold in the same moment.” For a man does

not like to lose his friend ; and very few friendships would endure a week, we are assured, if friends affectionately but unreservedly told each other all their faults ; besides that, most men really feel a little shy in pointing out errors and infirmities, even from the best of motives, of which, or of the like of which, they are tolerably sure of being quite as guilty themselves. And then, again, there is that "reluctance to see a person uncomfortable or unhappy which deters many from doing their duty to those about them, and ultimately causes tenfold more discomfort and misery than that which it temporarily averts." A late Professor of Moral Philosophy pronounces him who refrains from the duty of friendly rebuke, because he fears to give pain to one he loves, to be guilty of the same weakness which, in a case of bodily accident or disease, would "withhold the salutary potion, because it is nauseous, or the surgical operation which is to preserve life, and to preserve it with comfort, because the use of the instrument, which is to be attended with relief and happiness, implies a little momentary addition of suffering." He who cannot endure that one whom he hails his friend should perceive his irritability, or his sullenness, or his indolence, or his over-rashness of tongue, or whatever his chief admitted weakness may be, is pronounced something of a fool, and to be pretty certain to go friendless in the end. South speaks of few people being able, and fewer willing, to put themselves to so great an inconvenience as fault-finding for another's good, and to raise a storm about their own ears, to do an "odious ungrateful piece of service for an ungrateful person ;" and therefore, says he, men usually deal with such currish sharp natures as they do with mastiffs,— "they are fain to stroke them, though they deserve to be cudgelled." "To attempt to advise them out of their

irregularities, is as if a surgeon should offer to dress a wounded lion; he must look to perish in the address, and to be torn in pieces for his pains." But South would have gone along with Barrow in his practical canon, "Affect not to be reprehensive:" reprove not for slight matters: reproof is too grave and stately a thing to be prostituted upon petty matters; "to use it upon small cause derogateth from its weight when there is considerable reason for it. Friendship, charity, and humanity should cover such offences." Mackenzie has a keen eye for that delicacy, of which a good mind cannot divest itself, even amidst the proposed severity of reproof.

It was a maxim with St. Francis de Sales, as regards plain speaking and the art and practice of rebuke, that the sincerity which is not charitable, proceeds from a charity which is not sincere. "It is better to remain silent than speak the truth ill-humouredly, and so spoil an excellent dish by covering it with bad sauce." His advice was to imitate the good Samaritan, who poured oil and wine into the wounds of the unhappy traveller. "You know that in a good salad there should be more oil than vinegar or salt." Truth uttered with courtesy he compared, not so much to heaping coals of fire on the head, as to throwing roses in the face. "How can we resist a foe whose weapons are pearls and diamonds?" Some fruits, said he, like nuts, are by nature bitter, but rendered sweet by being candied with sugar; such is reproof, bitter till candied with meekness, and preserved with the fire of charity. It costs some men nothing to be true, as Frederick Robertson observed in a sermon,—for they have none of those sensibilities which shrink from inflicting pain: there is surely a bitter way of speaking truth which says little for a man's heart. A puzzle and an offence to such pachy-

derms would be so sensitively thin-skinned an organization as that of Madame d'Houdetot, as described by Madame Rémusat, who tells us, "Nous l'avons vue souffrir, . . . souffrir réellement, lorsqu'on exprimait le moindre blâme devant elle ; . . . elle montrait tout simplement la peine qu'on lui faisait éprouver." But this was morbid sensibility. An every way healthier type of the soul feminine than Madame's we have in excellent and exemplary Mistress Evelyn, of whom and of whose tact in letter-writing Dr. Bohun bears record, that "the reproofs in any of these numerous letters were so softly insinuated, that the greatest punishment to be inflicted upon any disobligation was only to have the contrary virtue to the fault they had been guilty of, highly applauded in the next correspondence, which was ever so managed as to please and improve." Margaret Fuller was noted for her readiness to reprove, in more direct and punitive fashion : she would call any offender to instant account, and rebuke him before all. Her biographers mention various cases of her reproof being taken well, and answering the purpose ; one instance is of a pronounced censure on a male culprit, "and there was not a particle of ill-will in it ; but it was truth which she could not help seeing and uttering, nor he refuse to accept ;"—another instance at Paris, where a "Mr. —" was struck dumb" by her invective, "his eyes fixed on her with wonder and amazement, yet gazing too with an attention which seemed like fascination." When she had done, he still looked to see if she had more to say, and when he found she had really finished, he arose, took his hat, said faintly, "I thank you," and left the room. He afterwards said to a friend, "I shall never speak ill of her. She has done me good." But one rather mistrusts the man, especially as "unveracity" is specially charged



against him. As for the faintly uttered "thanks," *they* may have been rather for finding the lecture over, than for the lecture itself. Evidently the strong-minded lady would not mince her words, or adopt the tone of my Lord Chesterfield, who, in a letter promising or menacing a frank system of fault-finding, engages not to administer emetics and cathartics, but only mild alteratives. "Frequent reproofs, corrections, and admonitions will be necessary ; but then, I promise you that they shall be in a gentle, friendly, and secret manner ; they shall not put you out of countenance in company, nor out of humour when we are alone." The politest of lettered peers does his spiriting so gently that we must insert a not before the word "harshly" and indeed qualify the entire passage, if we apply to him at all a passage that is in bits exquisitely inapplicable, from the dramatic fragments of a now venerable poet :

" — In this case,  
A father, full of truth, has checked his son ;  
Harshly perhaps ; for many a benefit  
Puts on the visor of a stern reproof :  
But oh ! within, (as roughest rinds conceal  
The tenderest kernels,) gentle thoughts abide ;  
Sweet meanings ; seeds that, if the soil be sure,  
Will bring forth fruits of wisdom."

It is the expostulation of a brother, Sir James Stephen exclaims, in reference to a venerable philanthropist ; unwelcome truth is delivered with scrupulous fidelity, and yet with a tenderness which demonstrates that the monitor feels the pain which he reluctantly inflicts. Sydney Smith was afraid of friendship being turned by fault-finders into a system of lawless and unpunishable impertinence : very few friends, he said, will bear to be told of their faults ; and if done at all, it must be done with infinite management and delicacy ; for if you indulge often in this practice, men think you hate, and

avoid you. We read of Channing when at school,—where he was known as “Peacemaker” and “Little King Pepin,”—that he made a point of rebuking among his schoolmates every sally that touched on the profane or the licentious, and this in so gentle a tone, manifestly so much more in sorrow than in anger, that the censure was well taken. Perthes was noted for a certain aptness for reproof—a “bold freshness,” is said to have “characterized his youth,” in this respect; and “in administering reproof Perthes generally hit the nail on the head.” Against insolence, falsehood, and baseness, he to the last would “blaze up instantly and vehemently,” even when under no apparent obligation to speak. Prior echoes Cicero in the assertion that

“Of all the gifts the gods afford  
(If we may take old Tully’s word)  
The greatest is a friend; whose love  
Knows how to praise, and when reprove.”

A loving friend’s rebuke is a rebuke—sinks into the heart, and convinces the judgment; an enemy’s or stranger’s rebuke, adds Mr. Charles Reade, “is invective, and irritates—not converts.” “This from a friend!” cries angered Antony, in Dryden’s Roman tragedy; and Dolabella answers,

“Yes, Antony, a true one;  
A friend so tender, that each word I speak  
Stabs my own heart before it reach your ear.  
Oh, judge me not less kind because I chide!”

### XXX.

#### *SATED WITH SUPERFLUITY.*

PROVERBS xxvii. 7.

WHILE to the hungry soul every bitter thing even is sweet, the full soul loatheth an honeycomb. Sated with sweets, the sweetest of things is, to the surfeited, worse than insipid,—it is sickening. Enough is as good as a feast, and better than a feast of which the feaster is too full. To know when to stop is an essential rule in the epicurean art. Extremes meet, and to be overdone with dainties is to be overcome with disgust. “Eat thou honey, because it is good; and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste.” But that the honey may still be accounted good, and honeycomb remain sweet to thy taste, (What is sweeter than honey? runs Samson’s riddle,) so eat of them as not to be sated with and sick of them, so eat as not to provoke a surfeit, a turning of the stomach, a revolting and reaction of disgust. So eat of any and every kind of food as not to be set against any and every other. For, to be stuffed full, however it may have come about, is *ipso facto* to have lost all stomach for the choicest of cates, so that one loathes the rarest dainty of them all.

“The sweetest honey  
Is loathsome in his own deliciousness,  
And in the taste confounds the appetite;”

because, as Mr. Dallas analyses the sensation, the prolonging to surfeit of pleasure produces a pain, which is afterwards through memory associated with the return of the pleasure. Feasts satiate, as we read in one of the Preludes to Mr. Patmore’s *Angel in the House*, and roses

even, if too long regarded, afflict the mind with fond unrest ;

“ Whate’er the uplooking soul admires,  
 Whate’er the senses’ banquet be,  
 Fatigues at last with vain desires,  
 Or sickens by satiety.”

The sated yet insatiable old sensualist in Shelley’s tragedy professes, or confesses,

“ When I was young I thought of nothing else  
 But pleasure ; and I fed on honey sweets :  
 Men, by St. Thomas ! cannot live like bees,  
 And I grew tired.”

There are flowers whose scent is so luscious that, as Mr. Charles Kingsley says, silly children will plunge their heads among them, drinking in their odour, to the exclusion of all fresh air : on a sudden, sometimes, comes a revulsion of the nerves : the sweet odour changes in a moment to a horrible one ; and the child cannot bear for years after the scent which has disgusted it by over sweetness.

A French proverb exists which hints, as an English paraphrase of it runs, that partridges unvaryingly served up at table during the whole of September may be advantageously replaced by some other *plat* during the month which follows. *Toujours perdrix*. Even on canvas this was found too much for Spain and the Spaniards to stomach—witness their protest against the invariable partridge (plus a cat and a dog) introduced by the painter royal, El Mudo (J. H. Naverete), as pictorial accessories *sine quibus non*. The Spanish Titian was even compelled to bind himself in a contract with King Philip to give up the partridge (and puss). Fenimore Cooper describes the meanest dweller in Oswego of old as habitually feasting on game that would have formed



the boast of a Parisian table ; and it was no more than a healthful commentary on the caprices of taste, and of the waywardness of human desires, that the very diet which in other scenes would have been deemed the subject of envy and repinings, got to pall on the appetite. He tells us how the coarse and regular food of the army, which it became necessary, at the time in question, to husband, on account of the difficulty of transport, rose in the estimation of the common soldier, who would at any time cheerfully desert his venison, and ducks, and pigeons, and salmon, to banquet on the sweets of pickled pork, stringy turnips, and half-cooked cabbage. Even an alderman has been known to weary of too unvarying a round of civic banquets, and to be not unwilling to allot one evening in seven to a beneficial change from turtle and champagne to roast mutton and pale sherry. So has it been surmised by apologists for literature not of the highest class of all, that the maximum of intellect might itself, perhaps, weary of the maximum of intellectual enjoyment, and crave from time to time permission to recur to a less refined but more substantial diet. Even objects that originally excited the highest interest, will, if long continued, cease to interest, and soon become even painful. The most beautiful couplet of the most beautiful poem, as Dr. T. Brown suggests, if repeated to us without intermission, for a very few minutes, would excite more uneasiness than could have been felt from a single recitation of the dullest stanza of the most soporific inditer of rhymes.

Partridge or porridge—either is good in its way, but of either one may have too much. That is a suggestive story Sir Walter Scott tells of a lunatic patient he knew in the Edinburgh Infirmary, who took the hospital and servants to be his own large establishment, reflecting his own wealth and grandeur, but who was puzzled by one

thing. Though provided, as he said, with a first-rate cook and proper assistants, and though his table was regularly supplied with every delicacy of the season, yet he confessed that, by some uncommon depravity of the palate, everything which he ate "tasted of porridge." That was because he was fed upon nothing else—*le pauvre homme !*

The priest's slave, in Horace, tired of living on the delicacies offered to his master's god, runs away from his service, that he may get a little common bread. *Pane ego jam mellitis potiore placentis*—*placenta* being cheesecakes, and cheesecakes are cloying for a continuance. They may soon cease to be *placenda*. Well says Swift, that—

"To stomachs clogg'd with costly fare  
Simplicity alone is rare ;  
While high, and nice, and curious meats  
Are really but vulgar treats."

Molière's Marquis protests with effusion, when inviting himself to a humble, pot-luck sort of dinner-table, quite out of his way, *Je suis des grands repas fatigué, je te jure*. To apply what Molière's Mercure says in another comedy, *Tels changements ont leurs douceurs, qui passent* indeed *l'intelligence* of the uninitiated. It was Byron's boast, that the day he came of age he dined on eggs and bacon and a bottle of ale ; and this favourite fare (which by no means agreed with him) he afterwards reserved for great occasions, once in four or five years or so. Genuine enough was his appreciation of the whim of his friend Matthews (who gave him and Hobhouse such a "splendid entertainment" before they set out for Constantinople) for dining at all sorts of out-of-the-way places ; somebody once popping upon him in a cheap Strand eatinghouse, where the alleged attraction was, that he paid a shilling to dine with his hat on. A pic-

nic, which is a temporary return to an aboriginal condition, derives, from its unfamiliarity, as Mr. Herbert Spencer remarks, a certain poetry which it would not have if it were habitual. Shaftesbury, in his *Inquiry concerning Virtue*, pronounces the satisfactions of the natural appetite, in a plain way, to be infinitely beyond the indulgence of the most refined and elegant luxury, as the luxurious themselves are apt to perceive upon occasion. "It has been experienced in people bred after the sumptuous way, and used never to wait, but to prevent [that is, anticipate] appetite, that when by any new turn of life they came to fall into a more natural course, or for a while, as on a journey or a day of sport, came accidentally to experience the sweet of a plain diet, recommended by due abstinence and exercise, they have with freedom owned that it was then they received the highest satisfaction and delight which a table could possibly afford." A friend told Mr. Dallas that he never enjoyed any food so much as a barley bannock and some milk, which he once got from some quarrymen who were eating their simple dinner among the Ross-shire hills. What says the Prince in *Idylls of the King*?

"Then said Gerain, 'I wish no better fare;  
I never ate with angrier appetite  
Than when I left your mowers dinnerless.'"

The late Mr. Walker, of the *Original*, police magistrate and periodical essayist, an oracle in questions of cuisine, would insist upon it that, even for dinner-parties, if only the materials and cooking be good, the plainest, cheapest food has attractions which are seldom to be found in the most laboured attempts. "Herrings and hashed mutton, to those who like them, are capable of affording as much enjoyment, when skilfully dressed, as rare and costly dishes." He thought it would be a great improvement to introduce, as a mode of enjoying easy society, small

parties to plain savoury dinners, which might not supersede more expensive repasts, but might be adopted as a variety and a relief. Relief and variety,—that is the question, and there's the rub. The philosophy of the matter may be expressed in M. de Ségur's suggestive remark, that "On trouve du plaisir à descendre tant qu'on croit pouvoir remonter dès qu'on le veut." The philosophy is, in fact, simply that of the French proverb, that 'tis easy to go afoot, when one leads one's horse by the bridle,—an adage which has been justly praised as setting at their true worth many cheap humilities; so easy it is to stoop from state, when that state may be resumed at will; so easy for one to part with luxuries and indulgences, which he only parts with exactly so long as it may please himself. Even

"The gentlest shade that walked Elysian plains  
Might sometimes covet dissoluble chains;  
Even for the tenants of the zone that lies  
Beyond the stars, celestial Paradise,  
Methinks 'twould heighten joy, to overleap  
At will the crystal battlements, and peep  
Into some other region, though less fair,  
To see how things are made and managed there.  
Change for the worse might please,"—

provided always that change back again were practicable at a minute's notice. A passage in Moore's Diary, relating to a confluence of great folks at his little cottage, comprises mention of "Lady Caroline offering to join the party, and eat an Irish stew in an *entresol*, by way of novelty." And by way of novelty no doubt it would go down well. When little Eglantine the perfumer is envious to learn from Mr. Walker—not our *Original* guide, philosopher, and friend, but the titular captain in Mr. Thackeray's novelet—what might be the *carte*, now, of his yesterday's dinner with the marquises and earls, and ventures to take turtle and



venison for granted, to begin with,—“Psha! we’re sick of *them!*” cries the captain: “We had pea-soup and boiled tripe. What do you think of that? We had sprats and herrings, a bullock’s heart, a baked shoulder of mutton and potatoes, pig’s head, and Irish stew. *I* ordered the dinner, sir, and got more credit for inventing it than they ever gave to Ude or Soyer. The marquis was in ecstasies, the earl devoured half a bushel of sprats, and if the viscount is not laid up with a surfeit of bullock’s heart, my name’s not Howard Walker”—which by the way, christianly speaking, it was not; but Hooker. Equivocal authority as this gentleman may be, his author, Michael Angelo Titmarsh, discussed the subject with equal unction and decision, at sundry times and in divers humours, as the humours took him and the time served. It is upon the sham side of the alleged relish that he loved to expatiate. As where he apostrophizes that Mr. Brandon who flowers into the full-blown Dr. Firmin of a later fiction: “It was only because your cloyed appetite was long unused to this simple meat that you felt so keen a relish for it; and I thought of you only last Saturday, at Mr. Lovegrove’s West India Tavern, Blackwall, where a company of fifteen epicures, who had scorned the turtle, poohpoohed the punch, and sent away the whitebait, did suddenly and simultaneously make a rush upon—a dish of *beans and bacon*.” In one of the Brown letters, our literary man about town and practised diner-out expounds the doctrine that there are no degrees in eating,—by which he meant, that mutton is as good as venison,—beefsteak, if you are hungry, as good as turtle,—bottled ale, if you like it, to the full as good as champagne,\*—nor was

\* “The man who, stretched upon a knoll with his gun by his side, calls for a draught of bitter beer from the pannier that carries the lancheon, knows right well that, though this be the beverage

there, he maintained, any delicacy in the world producible by Monsieur Francatelli or Monsieur Soyer, which was really better than toasted cheese. Had he not seen a dozen of epicures at a grand table forsake every French and Italian delicacy for boiled leg of pork and pease pudding? If we small folks receive great folks at our houses, he is for laying a wager that they will select mutton and gooseberry tart for their dinner, forsaking the *entrées* which the men in white Berlin gloves are handing round in the Birmingham plated dishes. Asking lords and ladies, who have big establishments of their own, to French dinners and dainties, he likens to inviting a grocer to a meal of figs, or a pastrycook to a banquet of raspberry tarts: they have had enough of them. Mr. Hayward propounds it as a secret worth knowing in a luxurious metropolis, that nothing is so attractive to the wealthy as a plain dinner and a small party: the noble proprietor of half a dozen princely residences, says he, will thank you with an effusion of gratitude for asking him to such a dinner—an occurrence perhaps unique in his long life of aristocratic banqueting. It is not a very new remark, as Mr. Shirley Brooks reminds us, that those who are accustomed to luxuries and comforts are often better able to endure privations than those to whom such matters are greater rarities; anybody who has had the misfortune to make a rough journey with his servant has made the observation; and it is said to have occurred to the Duke of Wellington, when certain dandy officers of his gracefully complimented the horse steaks, while the privates were almost in mutiny against *their* rations. In his celebrated *Re-*

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which for the moment he prefers, there are liquids beyond it in taste. . . . The deliberate selection of the lower form of pleasure does not interfere with our estimate of the higher.”—E. S. Dallas, *The Gay Science*, vol. i., p. 151.

*flections upon Exile*, Lord Bolingbroke tells us of the rich, "whose wanton appetites neither the produce of one country nor of one part of the world can satisfy," and for whom the whole habitable globe is ransacked, for whom the caravans of the East are continually in march, and the remotest seas are covered with ships, that "these pampered creatures, sated with superfluity, are often glad to inhabit a humble cot, and to make a homely meal. They run for refuge into the arms of frugality." Describing those abysses of darkness in the old town of Edinburgh, called "laigh shops," where fashionable folks of the last century used to regale themselves with raw oysters and porter, arranged in huge dishes upon a coarse table, in a dingy room, lighted by tallow candles, Dr. R. Chambers plausibly surmises that the rudeness of the feast and the vulgarity of the surroundings may have given a zest to its enjoyment, with which more refined banquets could not have been accompanied.

When Kaiser Joseph II. and the Czarina, autocrat of all the Russias, met at Kaidak in 1787, there was difficulty, owing to Joseph's precipitancy of movement, in procuring these august personages even a scanty meal. Such as it was, however, the two sovrans condescended to assist in preparing it, and found the preparation-process "great fun;" and when the repast was ready for them as they for it, they fell to with a will; or, as the historian of the House of Austria words the history of that "scanty meal," they "partook of it with more enjoyment than they had before derived from the greatest luxuries of the table." Montaigne points a moral by his reference to princes diverting themselves sometimes in disguising their qualities, deposing themselves for the nonce, and stooping to the poor and ordinary life of the meanest of their people. As in Horace,

"Plerumque gratæ divitibus vices,  
Mundæque parvo sub lare pauperum  
Cœnæ, sine aulæis et ostro,  
Sollicitam explicuere frontem."

Which has been freely Englished :

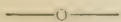
"Changes have often pleased the great ;  
And in a cell a homely treat  
Of healthy food and cleanly dressed  
Though no rich hangings grace the rooms,  
Or purple wrought in Tyrian looms,  
Have smoothed a wrinkled brow and calmed a ruffled  
breast."

Mr. Pepys in his Diary took particular notice of the fact that, in the memorable May of 1660, "the King and the two Dukes," before landing in merry England, to enjoy their own again, "did eat their breakfast, . . . and there being set some ship's diet before them, only to show them the manner of the ship's diet, they did eat of nothing else but pease and pork, and boiled beef." Every man Jack in the fleet must have felt flattered at this august election of junk. Some three years later we find the Diarist at Chelsea, with the Earl of Sandwich "all alone with one joynt of meat at dinner, and mightily extolling the goodness of his diet." Another twelvemonth, and we light on Mr. Pepys's own proper personal confession, "To dinner with my wife, to a good hog's harslet, a piece of meat I love, but have not eat of I think these seven years." Yet a lustrum, as time is told, and we revert to junk at sea. "The boatswain of the ship did bring us out of the kettle a piece of hot salt beef, and some brown bread and brandy ; and there we did make a little meal, but so good as I never would desire to eat better meat while I live, only I would have cleaner dishes." Mr. Pepys was too familiar with the literature of his day, and too well acquainted with the writings of Dryden, as well as with the man, not to have read, and



having read to cordially agree with, a passage in Glorious John's prologue to *All for Love; or, The World Well Lost*, accepted now as incomparably the best of his plays :

“ — The rich, when tired with daily feasts,  
For change, become their next poor tenant's guests ;  
Drink hearty draughts of ale from plain brown bowls,  
And snatch the homely rasher from the coals.”



## XXXI.

## HEART RESPONSIVE TO HEART.

PROVERBS xvii. 19.

VARIOUS are the interpretations put upon the proverb, “As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man ;” and of these some are unsatisfactory enough. Castalio understands by it, that as a man may know what kind of face he hath, if he will look into the water ; so may he know what kind of man he is, if he will examine his conscience. Bishop Patrick's exegesis of the passage seems nearer the mark : “A man may see himself, while he looks upon other men, as well as know other men by considering his own inclinations.” It is proposed, however, in this place, to take the verse in the sense of the ready response of heart to heart in a matter of common feeling, the direct answer of heart to heart in respect of natural emotion. What comes straight from one heart goes straight to another. Deep calleth unto deep. And the call is at once heard, and heeded, and answered. One touch of nature makes the whole world kin. Not that the famous line to that effect in *Troilus and Cressida* really has the meaning that is commonly foisted upon it ; for,

as a discerning critic long ago pointed out, the line in question has nothing whatever to do with a general *bonhomie* arising from the successful touch of a universally responsive chord; it says only that all men have a touch of family resemblance, and the following lines point out that this touch is the love and worship of novelty and change.

In the Introductory Discourse to her elaborately designed series of Plays on the Passions, Miss Baillie expatiates on the fact, that from the strong sympathy felt by most creatures, but the human above all, for others of their kind, nothing has become so much an object of man's curiosity as man himself; every person who is not deficient in intellect being more or less occupied in tracing among the individuals he converses with, the varieties of understanding and temper which constitute the characters of men, and receiving great pleasure from every stroke of nature that points out to him those varieties. "In a work abounding with the marvellous and unnatural, if the author has anyhow stumbled upon an unsophisticated genuine stroke of nature, we shall immediately perceive and be delighted with it, though we are foolish enough to admire, at the same time, all the nonsense with which it is surrounded." In novels, those works, she contends, which most strongly characterize human nature in the middling and lower classes of society, where it is to be discovered by stronger and more unequivocal marks, will ever be the most popular. Into whatever scenes the novelist may conduct us, what objects soever he may present to our view, still is our attention most sensibly awake to every touch faithful to nature; still are we upon the watch for everything that speaks to us of ourselves. In the "fair field of what is properly called poetry," in the enchanted regions of simile, metaphor, and

allegory, among heroes and nymphs, "amidst all this decoration and ornament, all this loftiness and refinement, let one simple trait of the human heart, one expression of passion, genuine and true to nature, be introduced, and it will stand forth alone in the boldness of reality, while the false and unnatural around it fade away upon every side, like the rising exhalations of the morning." One may apply the words of Emerson: "It is only to these simple strokes that the highest power belongs,—when a weak hand touches, point by point, the eternal beams and rafters on which the whole structure of Nature and society is laid." The genius which commands our applause, says Dr. Thomas Brown, is still the genius of a man: we see our common nature reflected, though with a beauty of which we were not sensible before; ceasing to recognize spontaneously our common nature, we feel for the work in question "that coldness which it is impossible for us not to feel with respect to everything which is absolutely foreign." A perusal of Mr. Swinburne's Tragedies left on Professor Lowell an impression of a world of shadows, inhabited by less substantial things than that nether realm in Homer where the very eidolon of Achilles is still real to us in its longings and regrets. But, "there are some touches of nature in the mother's memories of Althæa,\* so sweetly pathetic that they go as right to the heart as they came from it, and are neither Greek nor English, but broadly human." As the pathetic, observes Wordsworth in one of his Prefaces, participates of an "animal" sensation, it might seem that, if the springs of this emotion were genuine, all men, possessed of competent knowledge of the facts and circumstances, would be instantaneously affected; and, doubtless, he adds, "in

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\* Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon*.

the works of every true poet will be found passages of that species of excellence which is proved by effects immediate and universal." Every true poet has more or less command over the rock whence waters rush out—more or less mastery of the key that opes the fount of sympathetic tears. Tears are notably infectious. The great poets all know that Andromache, after parting with Hector, seeks her own palace, to weep there; and "through all her train the soft infection" runs. Achilles weeps at Priam's pleading; and "th' infectious softness through the heroes" runs again, as Mr. Pope words it. Helen, in "pomp of grief" appears, and bewails her desolateness, with sorrow-streaming eye: "Distressful beauty melts each stander-by; on all around th' infectious sorrow grows." Homeric in simplicity at least are such old chroniclers as Villehardouin, in whose pages we so often meet with such passages as this: "*Et alors, les six députés pleurant beaucoup, le doge et tous les autres commencèrent à pleurer de la pitié qu'ils en eurent.*" Prospero, with all his self-command, cannot refrain from tears when the greybeard counsellor from Naples, one honest man saved in the Tempest, is seen to shed some:

"Holy Gonzalo, honourable man,  
Mine eyes, even sociable to the show of thine,  
Fall fellowly drops."

Sigismunda's maids, in Dryden's adaptation from Boccaccio, as, bewildered, they gazed on their weeping mistress, "by infection wept." In his adaptation from Chaucer, when the "stern Athenian prince" dooms Palamon and Arcite, "dumb sorrow seized the standers-by:

"The queen, above the rest, by nature good,  
(The pattern formed of perfect womanhood)  
For tender pity wept: when she began,  
Through the bright quire the infectious virtue ran."



When Corporal Trim tells the story of Le Fevre, and comes to the lieutenant's son taking hold of his hand, and bursting into tears, "I never, in the longest march," said the corporal, "had so great a mind for my dinner, as I had to cry with him for company. What could be the matter with me, an' please your honour?" "Nothing in the world, Trim," said my Uncle Toby, blowing his nose, "but that thou art a good-natured fellow." Ariste, in Gresset's *Le Méchant*, is clear, on similar grounds,

"Que l'homme n'est point fait pour la méchanceté.  
Consultez, écoutez pour juges, pour oracles,  
Les hommes rassemblés ; voyez à nos spectacles,  
Quand on peint quelque trait de candeur, de bonté,  
Où brille en tout son jour la tendre humanité,  
Tous les cœurs sont remplis d'une volupté pure,  
Et c'est là qu'on entend le cri de la nature."

One of Hawthorne's descriptions of clerical life in the old time of the New World concerns certain "true saintly fathers," in whom the one thing lacking was the gift that descended at Pentecost in tongues of flame, symbolizing the power of addressing the whole human brotherhood in the heart's native language: their voices came as from afar, and came not home; whereas that of a less saintly brother did: his very sense of frailty kept him down on a level with the lowest, and his sympathies were intimate with the sinful brotherhood of mankind, "so that his heart vibrated in unison with theirs, and sent its own throb of pain through a thousand other hearts," in gushes of persuasive eloquence—persuasive because *de profundis*, from the great heart which at bottom is one, the wide world over.

The same suggestive author dwells significantly upon the rich endowment Arthur Dimmesdale possessed in his "very peculiar voice"—for a listener even who

comprehended nothing of the language in which that preacher spoke, might still, we are assured, have been swayed to and fro by the mere tone and cadence of his vocal organ : like all other music, it breathed passion and pathos, and emotions high or tender, in a tongue native to the human heart, wherever educated. "And yet, majestic as the voice sometimes became, there was for ever in it an essential character of plaintiveness. A loud or low expression of anguish,—the whisper, or the shriek, as it might be conceived, of suffering humanity, that touched a sensibility in every bosom." What was it? The complaint of a human heart, sorrow-laden, perchance guilty, telling its secret, whether of guilt or sorrow, to the great heart of mankind ; beseeching its sympathy or forgiveness,—at every moment,—in each accent,—and never in vain.

It has been said that in the drama, characteristic truth will compensate every other defect—nay, will do what appears a contradiction ; one strong genuine stroke of nature will cover a multitude of sins, even against nature herself. For when we meet in some scene of a good play a very fine stroke of this kind, we are apt to become "so intoxicated with it, and so perfectly convinced of the author's great knowledge of the human heart," that we are unwilling to suppose the whole of it has not been suggested by the same penetrating spirit. Many well-meaning and enthusiastic critics are charged by Miss Baillie with having given themselves a great deal of trouble in this way,—shutting their eyes most ingeniously against the fair light of nature for very love of it—converting, in their great zeal, sentiments palpably false, in regard both to the character and situation of the persons who utter them, sentiments which a child or a clown would detect, into the most skilful depicments of the heart. The dramatist of the passions can think

of no stronger instance to show how powerfully this love of nature dwells within us.

As none ever better distinguished than Shakspeare the varieties of human nature, so, Hartley Coleridge contends, have few comprehended as he did the mighty truth, that, in all its varieties and modifications, that nature is essentially one and the same—a truth which is asserted to be the sole law and measure of relative morality, the principle of just command and liberty, the key to all heart-knowledge, and the ground of all communion between souls.

The Autocrat of the Breakfast-table breaks off from one of his discursive “confidences,” to ask his fellow-guests, are they tired of his “trivial personalities,”—those splashes and streaks of sentiment, sometimes perhaps of sentimentality, which they may see when he shows them his heart’s corolla as if it were a tulip? He begs them not to fancy him an idiot whose conceit it is to treat himself as an exceptional being: “It is because you are just like me that I talk and know that you will listen. We are all splashed and streaked with sentiments,—not precisely with the same tints, or in exactly the same patterns, but by the same hand and from the same palette.” Sir Walter Scott, in his introductory chapter to *Waverley* in particular, but also to the *Waverley Novels* at large, explained his resolve to throw the force of his narrative upon the characters and passions of the actors—those passions common to men in all stages of society, and which had alike agitated the human heart, whether it throbbed under the steel corslet of the fifteenth century, the brocaded coat of the eighteenth, or the blue frock and white dimity waistcoat of that decade of the nineteenth within which he was then writing. So the Norwegian novelist Henrik Scharling urges in the preface to one of his fictions,

that the emotions of the mind of man are always and everywhere the same ; and native reviewers, while alleging the effort it costs to appreciate a foreign novel, allow that so far as the play of human passions is concerned, one great element of interest is present, whatever may be the author's nationality. The objection, however, holds good, in such a case, that although the basis of such a book may be in a sense œcumenical, the shape which it receives is determined by conditions to which the foreign reader is a stranger ; the passion or emotion is exhibited through an uncongenial medium—the view of life is different, the network of manners and associations is different, the standard of humour and pathos is different. But just so far as the grand elementary feelings of our common nature are concerned, the foreign author speaks home to the heart ; and heart answers to heart, beat for beat and throb for throb.

The original preface to the *Last Days of Pompeii* asserted its author's endeavour at fidelity to the features and costume of the age, but also, and "what is far more important," at a just representation of the human passions and the human heart, "whose elements in all ages are the same." In a later preface, he indirectly contrasted his work with that of similar writers who, in reviving the ancient shadows, sought occasion rather to display erudition, than to show how the human heart beats the same, whether under the Grecian tunic or the Roman toga. What seems to have finally impressed M. Guizot the most in his study of Gibbon's great work, is the truly philosophical discrimination (*justesse d'esprit*) which judges the past as it would judge the present, not permitting itself to be blinded by the clouds which time gathers around the dead, and which prevent us from seeing that under the toga as under the modern dress,



in the senate as in our councils, men were what they still are. It was long the fashion—and a depraved one it was—to treat antiquity as something apart from modern experience : men wearing tunics and togas, an eminent reviewer observes, were for the most part looked upon as belonging to a different race from those who wear coats and trousers. Professor Long is commended accordingly for his exceptional freedom from this error ; writing as he does of Cicero and Crassus, of Pompeius and Cæsar, as he would write of Bolingbroke and Marlborough, of Brougham and Wellington ; for he saw that, however men may differ in their habiliments, their manners, or their speech, they differ very little from one another in their passions, their motives of action, or their prejudices ; and that “even religion makes very little essential change in man’s nature ; that a Supreme Pontiff under a different dispensation would have been a decorous Primate, and the College of Augurs a respectable Dean and Chapter.” To Vivian Grey’s thinking, although we may have steam kitchens, human nature is much the same at the moment he is pacing along Pall-Mall East, as it was some thousand years ago, when equally wise men were walking on the banks of the Ilissus. Across the moonlit waters we hear the calm voice of Cythna telling the scared mariners, —

“Ye all are human—yon broad moon gives light  
To millions who the self-same likeness wear,  
Even while I speak, beneath this very night,  
Their thoughts flow on like ours, in sadness or delight.”

And anon she tells them,

“—— From your hearts  
I feel an echo ; through my inmost frame  
Like sweetest sound, seeking its mate, it darts.”

and later again : “Disguise it not—we have one human heart—All mortal thoughts confess a common home.”

And soon, on shore as at sea, her human words found sympathy in human hearts, and these as friend with friend made common cause with her. In his preface to the poem here cited, Shelley claimed to have chosen a story of human passion in its most universal character, and appealing to the common sympathies of every human breast. It is this recognition of our common nature, which gives, as Dr. Brown says, the chief interest to scenes that have been occupied with the passions of beings like ourselves. The gods of universal mythology have perished, but the mortals who bent the knee before them still survive in the immortality of our common nature—in that “universal interest which gives to us a sort of intellectual existence in scenes and times the most remote, and makes the thoughts and emotions of others as it were a part of our own being”—uniting the past, the present, and the future, and blending man with man wherever he is to be found. Bernier has been described as one “qui courait le monde et revenait sachant combien sous les costumes divers l’homme est partout le même.” Threadbare is the truism propounded by Alison, that human affairs are everywhere governed at bottom by the same principles—the varieties of colour, language, and civilization being but the different hues of passions and interests which are for ever identical among mankind. Would you know the sentiments, inclinations, and course of life of the Greeks and Romans? Study well, says David Hume, the temper and actions of the French and English. He denies that the earth, water, and other elements, examined by Aristotle and Hippocrates, are more like to those which at present lie under our observation, than the men described by Polybius and Tacitus are to those who now govern the world. If human nature were not, always and everywhere, in the most important points,

substantially the same, says Archbishop Whately, history could furnish no instruction ; but then again, if men's manners and conduct, circumstantially and externally, were not infinitely varied in various times and regions, hardly any one could fail to profit by that instruction. As it is, therefore, not a little diligence is called for in "recognizing, as it were, the same plant in different stages of its growth, and in all the varieties resulting from climate and culture, soil and season." Shallow readers are never wanting to shallow writers, who, as Wordsworth has it,

" — while they most ambitiously set forth  
Extrinsic differences, the outward marks  
Whereby society has parted man  
From man, neglect the universal heart."

Wordsworth, by the way, catches eagerly at Aristotle's assertion that Poetry is the most philosophic of all writing : it is so, he maintains—its object being truth, not individual and local, but general and operative ; not standing upon external testimony, but carried alive into the heart by passion ; truth which is its own testimony, which gives competence and confidence to the tribunal to which it appeals, and receives them from the same tribunal. "Poetry is the image of man and nature." And the poet writes under one restriction only, namely, the necessity of giving immediate pleasure to a human being possessed of that information which may be expected from him, not as a lawyer, a physician, a mariner, an astronomer, or a natural philosopher, but as a Man. Emphatically would Wordsworth say of the Poet what Shakspeare said of man, that "he looks before and after." He is the rock of defence for human nature ; an upholder and preserver, carrying everywhere with him relationship and love. "In spite of difference of soil and climate, of language

and manners, of laws and customs,—in spite of things silently gone out of mind, and things violently destroyed,—the Poet binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over the whole earth and over all time.” Poetry, in short, is defined by its votary the first and last of all knowledge—a thing immortal as the heart of man.

\* \* \* \* \*

“A harper that harps through mountain and glen,  
 Wandering, wandering the wide world over,  
 Sweetest of singers, yet saddest of men,  
 His soul’s lost Lady in vain to discover . . .  
 . . . Who has not loved? and who has not lost?  
 Wherever he wander, the wide world over,  
 Singing by city, and castle, and plain,  
 Abiding never, for ever a rover,  
 Each man that shall hear him will swear almost  
 In the minstrel’s song that he can discover  
 The selfsame lady by whom it was crost,  
 For love is love the wide world over.”

In the tale of human passion, in past ages, argues a master of the art, there is something of interest even in the remoteness of the time: we love to feel within us the bond which unites the most distant eras. “Men, nations, customs, perish; the affections are immortal;” and in them are found the sympathies which unite the ceaseless generations. If the past lives again, when we look upon its emotions, that is because it lives in our own.

“Strip from fashion the garment she wears; what remains  
 But the old human heart, with its joys and its pains?  
 The same drama that drew to its hopes and its fears  
 From the eyes of our fathers both laughter\* and tears.  
 ’Twas conceived in the heart of the first man on earth, . . .  
 It was acted in Egypt when Pharaoh was king;

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\* Real mirth, says Johnson, must be always natural, and nature is uniform. Men have been wise in very different modes; but they have always laughed the same way.—*Life of Cowley.*



It was spoken in Attic, and sung to the string  
 Of the cithern in Greece ; and in Rome, word for word,  
 It was uttered by Horace in accents long heard . . .  
 Other men, other manners ! anon from the North,  
 With the Hun and the Vandal, unchanged it rolled forth.  
 New in language alone, it was hymned to the harp  
 Harold bore by the Baltic ; its music fell sharp  
 With the sword of the Guiscard ; it made Rudel's weeping  
 Melodious for Melisanth ; still is it keeping  
 In play the perpetual pulses of passion  
 In the heart of mankind ; and whatever the fashion  
 Of the garments we wear, 'tis the same life they cover . . .

— Men discern

The man through the mask ; the heart moved by the heart  
 Owns the pathos of life in the pathos of art.  
 And the heart is the sole grand republic, in which  
 All that's human is equal, the poor and the rich :  
 The sole indestructible state, time can touch  
 With no change : before Rome, before Carthage, 'twas such  
 As it will be when London and Paris are gone."

—O—

### XXXII.

#### INEXPUGNABLE FOOLISHNESS.

PROVERBS xxvii. 22.\*

**B**RAYED in a mortar with a pestle, the foolishness of the fool sticks to him still. It is a part of himself, and he would cease to be himself were he once rid of it.

One of Shenstone's apophthegms runs, "There is none can baffle men of sense, but fools, on whom they can make no impression." Crabbe pictures Comedy aiming fruitlessly at foolishness impersonated—

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\* In the Second Series of *Secular Annotations on Scripture Texts*, pp. 115-121, may be found half a dozen pages of previous illustrations of this text, under the heading, "Brayed in a Mortar."

“Who shoots at Folly, but her arrow fails :  
 Folly, by Dulness armed, eludes the wound,  
 And harmless sees the feathered shafts rebound ;  
 Unhurt she stands, applauds the archer’s skill,  
 Laughs at her malice, and is Folly still.”

La Bruyère’s words are applicable, every one of them, to the impenetrable, imperturbable, indomitable fool : “l’on cherche en vain à le corriger par des traits de satire qui le désignent aux autres, et où il ne se reconnaît pas lui-même : ce sont des injures dites à un sourd.” While hailing as inimitable the saying of Schiller’s, that “Heaven and earth fight in vain against a dunce,” or against stupidity, Archbishop Trench quotes, as moving in the same line with, though far inferior to it, the Chinese proverb : “One has never so much need of his wit, as when he has to do with a fool.” Erasmus pointedly, almost pathetically, asks, *Quid autem facias istis qui . . . stupidiore sint quam ut satisfactionem intelligant ?* There is a quality in certain people which Mr. Thackeray takes to be above all advice, exposure, or correction : “Only let a man or woman have ‘dulness’ sufficient, and they need bow to no extant authority.” For a dullard recognizes no better ; a dullard can’t see that he is in the wrong ; a dullard has no scruples of conscience, no doubts of pleasing, or succeeding, or doing right, no qualms for other people’s feelings, no respect but for the fool himself. “How can you make a fool perceive that he is a fool ? Such a person can no more see his own folly than he can see his own ears.” Perhaps they ought to be long enough, however, for him to see *them*.

The great quality ascribed to stupidity, is that of being unalterably contented with itself. Like the French philosopher’s *fat*, or fribble, “il est là précisément celui dont la multitude rit, et qui seul est grave et ne rit point.” “Il regarde le monde sans pudeur ; il n’a pas,

le sot, de quoi rougir." There is what a Scottish divine calls a "beautiful equanimity" about the thorough dunce: he is so completely stupid, that he never for an instant suspects that he is stupid at all. The clever man is apt to have misgivings about the extent of his powers, but "your entire booby knows no such fear." Bottom the weaver goes through his part in the play with unruffled composure and confidence. Neither the wit of the courtiers nor the presence of the Duke, as Dr. Maginn remarks, has any effect upon his nerves. He replies to the jest of Demetrius (which he does not understand) with the "self-command of ignorant indifference." It is true that Oberon designates him as a "hateful fool;" that Puck stigmatizes him as the greatest blockhead of the set; and that the audience vote him to be an ass; "but what matter is that?" Let the galled jade wince; *his* withers are unwrung. Let the thin-skinned writhe and wriggle; *he* is rhinoceros-hided, and no satirist knows where to have him. What feeling mind, exclaims Peter Pindar, would be a bull at stake?

"Pinched by this mongrel, by that mastiff torn;  
 Who'd make a feast to treat the public scorn?  
 Who'd be a bear that grasps his club with pride,  
 With which his dancing-master drubs his hide?"

None, submits Peter, but the arrantest fool turns butt to catch the shafts of ridicule; and when the object of his derision retorts, "With mere contempt the grinning world I see, and always laugh at those who laugh at me," the rejoinder is, then "may I never thrive, but you must be the merriest man alive." And again in Dr. Wolcot's Epistle to Sylvanus Urban the reflection occurs,—

"How blest the fool! he thinks he all things knows;  
 With joy he wakes, with joy his eyelids close:  
 Pleased through the world to spread his own renown,  
 With calm contempt he looks on others down;

Thrice envied being, whom no tongue can wound,  
In pride's impenetrable armour bound !”

That wonderful self-complacency with which the fools of this earth are endowed, points the moral of one of Fitzboodle's tales. And wonderful indeed is what Molière's Clitandre admires in his Trissotin,

“Cette intrépidité de bonne opinion,  
Cet indolent état de confiance extrême  
Qui le rend en tout temps si content de soi-même.”

Mr. Wyndham's defence of bull-baiting, partly on the ground that it was a real pleasure to the animal chiefly concerned, affording him in fact an agreeable excitement, has been generally discredited in the case of the bull ; but there are some human beings to whom it has been thought difficult not to apply it,—this being the only amusement that can be got out of them ; and great is the self-command required in one who has to do with a thoroughly stolid and withal self-complacent companion, not to try what “sticking moral pins into him” will effect by way of diversion. Lord Macaulay got hold of a paradox after his own heart when he argued of Boswell, that if he had not been a great fool, he would never have been a great writer ; since he never could have produced so excellent a book had it not been for the qualities which made him the butt of his associates,—among which qualities, “insensibility to all reproof” stands nearly foremost,—“a cool self-complacency, a perfect unconsciousness that he was making a fool of himself.” “Having himself no sensibility to derision and contempt, he took it for granted that all others were equally callous.” And yet in a variety of essential particulars Boswell was certainly no fool. Nor were the conquests he made in life of a kind to draw upon him such terms of concession as Talbot expresses in Schiller's *Junfrau*—



"Folly, thou conquerest, and I must yield !  
 Against stupidity the very gods  
 Themselves contend in vain."

Especially is this contention in vain against stupidity when well stricken in years. Not to all men do years bring the philosophic mind. Not to all do they bring that which should accompany old age, in the way of wisdom and reflective power. To the Venerable Bede is ascribed the popular saying, that there is no fool like an old fool ; and everyday experience proves that there is no matter-of-fact incompatibility between irrationality and old age, and that to many a modern senior might the warning in Sophocles apply, *Μὴ 'φευρεθῆς ἄνους τε καὶ γέρον ἄμα*. The subject of Canning's satire appears to have been far from deserving so sharp an expression of it as in the stanzas parodying Moore's familiar lines,

"Believe me, if all those ridiculous airs  
 Which you practise so pretty to-day  
 Should vanish by age, and your well-twisted hairs,  
 Like my own, be both scanty and grey :

"Thou would'st still be a goose, as a goose thou hast been,  
 Though a fop and a fribble no more,  
 And the world that has laughed at the fool of eighteen,  
 Would laugh at the fool of threescore.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Oh, the fool that is truly so, never forgets,  
 But as truly fools on to the close," etc.

Novelists of some note are taxed with ignoring the fact that some of us have the capacity to learn—for however slow we may be to receive benefit from stripes, and dull scholars as experience may find us, still we generally manage, it is hoped, to get a few lessons by heart, and to avoid this year the patent mistakes we had made and suffered for last year. But the writers in question seem to think differently of mankind ; and in their gallery of illustration men and women are but a

shade removed from moral idiocy, and prove themselves incapable of learning, however strenuously they may be taught, and however bitterly they may suffer for previous failures,—all of them pursuing for a second, third, and fourth time exactly the same path as that by which they have come to grief before. Self-conceit often strengthens as one grows older; and moralists depict for us an “obstinate old fool” around whom self-love has thrown a magic veil, which blinds him to the sneers of others and the strong contempt so openly exhibited; for “self-love has always something comfortable to retire upon.” It seems to be a fancy with some folks that a man grows wise by growing old, without taking any particular pains about it. But “the older the crab-tree the more crabs it bears,” says the proverb. Taking note—half amused, half distressed—of the follies to which men are seen to commit themselves when going down the hill of life, a great French *pensée*-writer is moved to exclaim, “C’est la jeunesse encore qui, malgré ses fougues et ses promptitudes, est sérieuse et sensée; c’est la seconde partie de la vie qui se fait égarée ou légère.”

Hawthorn describes a kind of ludicrous unfitness in the idea of a venerable rose-bush; and applies the remark by analogy to human life—persons who can only be graceful and ornamental, who can give the world nothing but flowers, should die young, he contends, and never be seen with grey hairs and wrinkles. How much more persons who can only be foolish and frivolous! One recalls the late Mr. Charles Buxton’s humorous deprecation of old people as such, and his wish to have them decently disposed of off-hand—say, to have them shot by the bishop of the diocese. Not always *le temps remédie aux torts de la jeunesse*, as one of Gresset’s elderly people says of a junior, about whose future another veteran is less hopeful:

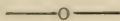
“ Non ; il peut rester fat : n'en voit-on pas sans cesse  
 Qui jusqu'à cinquante ans gardent l'air éventé,  
 Et sont les vétérans de la fatuité ? ”

Do you suppose fools' caps do not cover grey hair, as well as jet or auburn ? a later satirist inquires. This he knows, that there are late crops of wild oats, as well as early harvests of them ; and from observation he is convinced that the *avena fatua* grows up to the very last days of the year.

“ What weakness see not children in their sires !  
 Grand-climacterical absurdities ! ”

exclaims Dr. Young ; adding that

“ It makes folly thrice a fool ;  
 And our first childhood might our last despise.”



### XXXIII.

#### PASSING FAIR.

PROVERBS XXXI. 30.

THE words of King Lemuel, after the teaching that his mother taught him, are never more emphatic, never more fervid and impressive, than when asserting the excellence of the virtuous woman, and her priceless worth—priceless, for it is far above rubies. Having expatiated with vigorous enthusiasm on her simply invaluable qualities, he finishes with the maxim, saw, or *pensée* : “ Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain ; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.” “ Beauty's sweet, but beauty's frail,” is one of Carew's texts, metrically and musically applied and enforced :

“ 'Tis sooner past, 'tis sooner done,  
 Than summer's rain or winter's sun ;  
 Most fleeting when it is most dear ;  
 'Tis gone while but we say—'tis here.

Those curious locks, so aptly twined,  
 Whose every hair a soul doth bind,  
 Will change their auburn hue, and grow  
 White and cold as winter's snow.  
 That eye, which now is Cupid's nest,  
 Will prove his grave, and all the rest  
 Will follow ; in the cheek, chin, nose,  
 Nor lily shall be found, nor rose."

His contemporary, Sir Henry Wotton, in his lines of farewell to the vanities of the world, calls "Beauty, th' eye's idol, but a damask'd skin." Beauty impersonate, in Calderon's *Great Theatre of the World*, is taunted for that she remembers not the saying of Ezekiel, when he showed how through pride was perfect beauty resolved to foul corruption ; nor bethinks her that all the beauty of the world is a flower of hastiest doom ; that there is neither white nor ruddy rose, which has unrolled the rich beauty of its leaflets to the flattering day and the wooing sun, but must wither—*que no caduque*.

"Here nature cannot her sharp grief repress,  
 Seeing how short is beauty's earthly doom,  
 Still growing worse than what it was and less."

For women, says Duke Orsino, are as roses, whose fair flower, being once displayed, doth fall that very hour. Another of Shakspeare's dukes, and a more philosophical, less sentimental one, tells Isabella that the hand that hath made her fair, hath made her good : "The goodness, that is cheap in beauty, makes beauty brief in goodness ; but grace, being the soul of your complexion, should keep the body of it ever fair." The strain of the Passionate Pilgrim is plaintive as beseems him :

"Beauty is but a vain and doubtful good,  
 A shining gloss, that fadeth suddenly ;  
 A flower that dies, when first it 'gins to bud ;  
 A brittle glass, that's broken presently :  
 A doubtful good, a gloss, a glass, a flower,  
 Lost, vaded, broken, dead within an hour.



“And as goods lost are sold or never found,  
 As faded gloss no rubbing will refresh,  
 As flowers dead lie withered on the ground,  
 As broken glass no cement can redress,  
     So beauty, blemished once, for ever's lost,  
     In spite of physic, painting, pain, and cost.”

Carew, accounted the prince of amatory versifiers of his day, and said by Wood to be almost “adored” by his fellow-poets in general, and by Jonson in particular, has already been quoted in these pages, on the theme of beauty's evanescence. He will bear quoting again, in another metre, and not from a merely negative point of view, for here he affirms what is better than beauty, as well as insists on the perishable tenure of that gift :

“He that loves a rosy cheek,  
     Or a coral lip admires,  
 Or from starlike eyes doth seek  
     Fuel to maintain his fires,—  
 As old Time makes those decay,  
 So his flames must waste away.

“But a smooth and steadfast mind,  
     Gentle thoughts and calm desires,  
 Hearts with equal love combined,  
     Kindle never-dying fires.  
 Where these are not, I despise  
 Lovely cheeks or lips or eyes.”

The wind-up of Waller's mission of “lovely rose” to mistress is :

“Then die ! that she  
 The common fate of all things rare  
     May read in thee ;  
 How small a part of time they share  
 That are so wondrous sweet and fair !”

*La beauté*, says Rousseau, “passe avec les années, L'esprit seul est la véritable ressource du sexe.” Pope would have Miss Blount trust not too much her now resistless charms,

“Those, age or sickness soon or late disarms :  
 Good humour only teaches charms to last,  
 Still makes new conquests, and maintains the past.  
 Love raised on beauty will like that decay.”

The text is enforced anew in the *Rape of the Lock* :

“But since, alas ! frail beauty must decay,  
 Curled or uncurled since locks will turn to grey,

\* \* \* \*

What then remains, but well our power to use,  
 And keep good-humour still, whate’er we lose ?”

The exception to be taken to beauty as a marriage portion (if it be beauty of the highest order), is not, says Sir Henry Taylor, that it can become otherwise than precious while it lasts, but rather that, as it is precious so is it perishable, and that, let it be valued as it may, it must be accounted at the best but a melancholy possession:—

“For human beauty is a sight  
 To sadden rather than delight ;  
 Being the prelude of a lay  
 Whose burthen is decay.”

Mr. Forester, in *Melincourt*, avows that as to what is called beauty, mere symmetry of form and features, it would be an object with him in purchasing a statue, but none whatever in choosing a wife. Let her countenance be the mirror of good qualities, such as truthful simplicity, tender feeling, kindly goodwill, and she cannot be otherwise than beautiful. He thinks with the Athenians that beauty and goodness are inseparable—καλὸς κ’ἀγαθός. Giving to an imaginary painter an imaginary commission to paint the wedded companion of his Westmoreland home, De Quincey retracts the injunction to do justice to her physical loveliness: “Paint her arms like Aurora’s, and her smiles like Hebe’s;—but no, dear M——! not even in jest let me insinuate that thy power to illuminate my cottage rests upon a tenure so perishable as mere personal beauty.” It is in Mrs.

Wordsworth, as he first saw her, that the same writer gratefully recognized a remarkable proof how possible it is for a woman "neither handsome nor even comely, according to the rigour of criticism—nay, generally pronounced very plain," to exercise all the practical fascination of beauty, through the mere compensatory charms of sweetness all but angelical, of simplicity the most entire, womanly self-respect and purity of heart speaking through all her looks, acts, and movements. Currer Bell's Professor professes in print to be no Oriental; white necks, carmine lips and cheeks, clusters of bright curls, do not suffice for him without that Promethean spark which will live after the roses and lilies are faded, the burnished hair grown grey. In another of her books Miss Brontë compares Ginevra and Paulina, each a beauty in her way,—the former having the advantage in material charms, the latter in attractions more subtle and spiritual—in light and eloquence of eye, grace of mien, and winning variety of expression. Of one of the most celebrated and winsome of French "beauties" we are expressly told by a contemporary and competent critic, that she "n'eut jamais beaucoup de beauté, elle avait surtout de l'agrément." And by another, that "il faut pourtant avouer que son esprit est plus charmant que son visage." "Know'st thou not," says Hero to Sir Valentine, in *Woman's Wit*,

"That beauty will take cold—will have the toothache—  
Will catch a fever—that its peachy cheek  
Will canker in a night—that its sweet lips,  
Palace of smiles, spasm will compel to change  
Their garish tenants for uncouth contortions—  
That its fair dress of pride, its velvet skin,  
Humours will spot, discolour—that, in brief,  
It is a thing in value vanishing  
As fickle merchandise, which rates to-day  
Enormously—the next, may go a-begging?

*Sir Val.* Thou mean'st the beauty that but meets the eye?

*Hero.* I mean the beauty thou alone canst see,  
And provest thou only see'st."

But who, says Richardson's Clarissa, would grudge a pretty fool her short day? since with her summer's sun when her butterfly flutters are over, and the winter of age and furrows arrives, she "will feel the just effects of having neglected to cultivate her better faculties; for then, like another Helen, she will be unable to bear the reflection even of her own glass; and being sunk into the insignificance of a *mere old woman*, she will be entitled to the contempts which follow that character;" whereas the "discreet matron," who, as Miss Harlowe advisedly words it, "carries *up* into advanced life" the ever-amiable character of virtuous prudence and useful experience, finds solid veneration take place of airy admiration, and more than supply the want of it. One of the *Letters to Julia* is admonitory in witty earnest:

"What though as yet no spot begin  
To stain the brightness of the skin,  
Where York and Lancaster combine  
Their roses in those cheeks of thine?  
Deem not the well-meant hint officious,  
That we he-creatures are capricious,  
That when your charms have ceased to blind us,  
Nor prayers can move, nor oaths can bind us.  
Soon Autumn on those charms encroaches,  
Soon winter's icy hand approaches.  
Then from dimmed eyes unheeded flow  
The bitter tears of fruitless woe;  
The faded bosom Man forsakes,  
Though the poor heart beneath it breaks."

John Jerningham's remonstrance, is it not written in his wife's *Journal*?

"Time is so pitiless," he said;  
'Shall time be pitiless in vain?  
When youth is fled, and beauty dead,  
What will remain?—what will remain?'"



The time comes when Alton Locke has to ask himself what it was he lately adored,—a soul, or a face? the inward reality, or the outward symbol, which is only valuable as a sacrament of the loveliness within? What was that beauty but a hollow mask? Bitterly he compares it with the aspect of one now sitting by him, “wan and faded, beautiful no more as men call beauty, but with the spirit of an archangel gazing from those clear fiery eyes.” *Que regrettes-vous?* asks Michelet of such a one: “La beauté de teint, de traits, que vous eûtes par hasard de naissance, . . . la faveur accidentelle de l’âge où nous passons tous? Mais la rare et personnelle beauté que vous avez prise, c’est vous-même, votre âme visible, telle que vous la fîtes par une vie pure, une noble et constante harmonie.” Some one has said that as well might you look for good fruit and blossom on a rootless and sapless tree, as for charms that will endure in a feeble and relaxed nature: for a little while, the blooming semblance of beauty may flourish round weakness; but it cannot bear a blast; it soon fades, even in serenest sunshine. A modern philosopher hails this advantage in ugliness, that it mends with years; inasmuch as it has nothing to spoil, it takes courage. As Lady Charlotte Lindsay, witty and plain, put it, “My ugliness has lost its bloom.” Beauty is the true sport of time; it is composed of evanescent qualities; indeed it is alleged to be its charm that it passes: we must make the most of the show, for it stays among us but a day. Age is the theme of the Essay-writer who testifies that the most worn and tell-tale faces he can call to mind, most suggesting the question or the exclamation, How old! are the faces of once handsome women. “It is beauties that make wrecks—an epithet never applicable to the harsh or commonplace.” Nevertheless there may be a fallacy in the saw, so trite that it goes for a truism,

about beauty being only skin deep. "And all the carnal beauty of my wife is but skin deep," quoth Sir Thomas Overbury in *A Wife*; and one of Molière's learned ladies reflects that

"La beauté du visage est un frêle ornement,  
Une fleur passagère, un éclat d'un moment,  
Et qui n'est attaché qu'à la simple épiderme."

Whereas Mr. Herbert Spencer is rife with physiological reasons, founded on the framework of the face and its osseous structure, to prove that the saying that beauty is but skin deep is but a skin-deep saying. He believes and maintains that beauty of character *is* related to beauty of face; and while admitting that plainness may co-exist with nobility of nature, and fine features with baseness, he yet holds that mental and facial perfection are fundamentally connected. And there are stalwart and strenuous supporters, of either sex and every kind, of the doctrine that beauty is a real boon, a gift direct from the Giver of every good and perfect gift, with Whom, unlike *this* gift, there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu exposes in one of her letters the mistake, as she deems it, "usual in mothers," of being at great pains to persuade any one of their daughters who may be a beauty, that she is ugly, or at least that they think so, "which the young woman never fails to believe springs from envy, and is perhaps not much in the wrong." My lady would, if possible, give the young beauty a just notion of her figure, and show her how far it is valuable. "Every advantage has its price, and may be over or under valued. It is the common doctrine of (what are called) good books, to inspire a contempt of beauty, riches, etc., which has done as much mischief among the young of our sex as an over eager desire of them." Why they should not look

on those things as blessings where they are bestowed, though not necessities that it is impossible to be happy without, Lady Mary cannot conceive. The Marquis de la Fare insisted that "*il ne faut pas mépriser les dons de la nature, pour petits qu'ils soient, quand on les a dans leur perfection ;*" and he might have cited Homer to his purpose, where Paris replies to Hector's reproaches about his beauty, that the splendid gifts of the gods are never to be rejected or despised. We are naturally disposed, as one of the Brontë sisters argued, to love what gives us pleasure, and what more pleasing than a beautiful face—when we know no harm of the possessor at least? If a woman is fair and amiable, she is praised for both qualities, but especially the former, by the bulk of mankind; if on the other hand she is disagreeable in person and character, "her plainness is commonly inveighed against as her greatest crime, because, to common observers, it gives the greatest offence." They that have beauty, let them be thankful for it, says Agnes Grey, and make a good use of it, like any other talent; and let those who have it not, console themselves, and do the best they can without it; "certainly, though liable to be over-estimated, it is a gift of God, and not to be despised." Mr. Thackeray had his word of satire for the "good-natured female friends" who are given to ask what is there in a pair of pink cheeks and blue eyes forsooth? and to exalt other gifts and graces, or acquirements and accomplishments, which are so "far more valuable for a female," than those fugitive charms which a few years will inevitably tarnish. Quite edifying he deemed it, to hear women speculate upon the worthlessness and the evanescence of beauty. Some women take such speculations still worse from some men. When Mdlle. de Sévigné's ex-master in philosophy, the Abbé de la Mousse, took the liberty of reminding that surpassing beauty that her

charms, like all things else, were subject to decay, "Yes," she replied, "but they are not decayed yet." She was right, Mr. Hayward holds, and so was the English girl who, on being reminded by her spiritual guide that beauty was only skin deep, remarked that this was deep enough till people began going into society without their skins. "You seem to have quite a conceit of your beauty," Aunt Nesbit tells Nina Gordon; and that demoiselle accepts the impeachment with engaging candour: "Well, I know I am pretty. I'm not going to pretend I don't. I like my own looks, now, that's a fact. I'm not like one of your Greek statues, I know. I'm not wonderfully handsome, nor likely to set the world on fire with my beauty. I'm just a pretty little thing," and that suffices. Miss Rhoda Broughton impatiently dismisses to the limbo of dull platitudes and insipid common-places the text that "beauty is a fading flower." Of course it is true, she admits—tiresomely, provokingly, heart-breakingly true; so true as to be almost a self-evident proposition. "Ay me, indeed! What so frail, so butterfly-lived, as beauty in the individual? Hardly are we consoled by the reflection that at least in the species it seems perennial." But then she goes on to say, that although the visible presence of this fairest of earth's visitants—"this living witness that Eden once existed"—is so sadly short, yet in memory it outlives all the other powers that sway our destinies; and *Dreams of Fair Women*, thousands of years dead and gone, still inspire laureates and enchant their readers.

Truisms both,—the spell of beauty, and the evanescence of beauty. If Helen and Cleopatra have still their poets, so neither will the theme of Burns' verse be ever too old for repetition:

"The lily's hue, the rose's dye,  
The kindling lustre of an eye;



Who but owns their magic sway,  
Who but knows they all decay !  
The tender thrill, the pitying tear,  
The generous purpose, nobly dear,  
The gentle look, that rage disarms—  
These are all immortal charms."

Something than beauty dearer, Thomson sings, in homage to a "mind-illumined face," reflecting truth, goodness, honour, gentleness, and love. And in his *Amanda* he tells us 'tis not for common charms he sighs, for what the vulgar beauty call ; 'tis not a cheek, a lip, an eye, but 'tis the soul that lights them all. Leigh Hunt depreciates the Venus de' Medici, whose face seemed to him to vilify and vulgarize all which her person inspires : the question lying, as he puts it, between a figure divine and a face altogether unworthy. Venus could not be Venus without attractiveness of expression, he contends : a beautiful figure is not all, nor even half : it is far more requisite to have beauty in the eyes, beauty in the smile. Addison's enamoured Juba speaks for his author, as well as for himself, when he professes,

" 'Tis not a set of features, or complexion,  
The tincture of a skin that I admire,  
Beauty soon grows familiar to the lover,  
Fades in his eye, and palls upon the sense.  
The virtuous Marcia towers above her sex :  
True she is fair, oh how divinely fair !  
But still the lovely maid improves her charms  
With inward greatness, unaffected wisdom,  
And sanctity of manners," etc.

Mighty prosy is the prince in his raptures and reflections, but he means well, *le pauvre homme !* and we are glad to find that albeit Cato's soul shines out in everything she acts or speaks, her looks are also the habitation of winning mildness and attractive smiles, that with becoming grace "soften the rigour of her father's virtues,"—*atrox* is the classical epithet.

One of Crabbe's prettiest pictures is that of Lucy, in his tale of *The Mother* :

"There was such goodness, such pure nature seen  
In Lucy's looks, a manner so serene ;  
Such harmony in motion, speech, and air,  
That without fairness she was more than fair ;  
Had more than beauty in each speaking grace  
That lent their cloudless glory to the face,  
Where mild good sense in placid looks were\* shown,  
And felt in every bosom but her own."

We read of Lalla Rookh, in the closing chapter of her veracious history, that what she had lost of the bloom and radiancy of her charms was more than made up by "that intellectual expression, that soul beaming forth from the eyes, which is worth all the rest of loveliness." Wordsworth describes gladsome spirits, and benignant looks, that for a face not beautiful did more than beauty for the fairest face can do. Dr. Reid, the metaphysician, pronounces good nature to be the best feature, even in the finest face. "Modesty, sensibility, and sweetness, blended together, so as either to enliven or correct each other, give almost as much attraction as the passions are capable of adding to a very pretty face." *Cette femme n'était pas belle ; elle était bien plus que belle*, says Frédéric Soulié of one of his charmers. Charlotte Brontë's are the lines,—

"You ask if she had beauty's grace ?  
I know not—but a nobler face  
My eyes have seldom seen ;  
A keen and fine intelligence,  
And, better still, the truest sense,  
Were in her speaking mien.  
But bloom or lustre was there none."

With which we may compare Scott's description of a young face of the unfair sex :—

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\* Sic. Nor is this a singular, at least single, instance of Mr. Crabbe's putting plural for singular.

“A face more fair you well might find,  
 For Redmond’s knew the sun and wind,  
 Nor boasted, from their tinge when free,  
 The charm of regularity ;  
 But every feature had the power  
 To aid th’ expression of the hour,” etc.

Stella thanked Swift, in a birthday epistle, for having taught her, young, to “despise the ogling of a coxcomb’s eyes,” and to cultivate charms that are more lasting ; and she drew a sketch of a beauty just decayed, invoking art to nature’s aid, and failing in the artificial :

“Such is the fate of female race  
 With no endowments but a face ;  
 Before the thirtieth year of life,  
 A maid forlorn, or hated wife.”

The concluding lines of (last century’s) Lord Palmerston’s poem on Beauty avow, on the other hand, that in vain the stealing hand of Time may pluck the blossoms of their prime : “Envy may talk of bloom decayed, how lilies droop, and roses fade ;” but constancy has other charms for a retainer, and the John Anderson in his old age, fond as ever of the bride of his young manhood, sees “still with fond endearments blend the wife, the mistress, and the friend.” The *Angel in the House* is the correlative of *Faithful for Ever* ; and Mr. Coventry Patmore’s

“Jane is not fair, yet pleases well  
 The eye in which no others dwell ;  
 And features somewhat plainly set  
 And homely manners leave her yet  
 The crowning boon and most express  
 Of Heaven’s inventive tenderness,  
 A woman. But I do her wrong,  
 Letting the world’s eyes guide my tongue !  
 She has a handsomeness that pays  
 No homage to the hourly gaze,  
 And dwells not on the arch’d brow’s height  
 And lids which softly lodge the light,

Nor in the pure field of the cheek  
 Flowers, though the soul be still to seek ;  
 But shows as fits that solemn place  
 Whereof the window is the face :  
 Blankness and leaden outlines mark  
 What time the Church within is dark ;  
 Yet view it on a Sunday night,  
 Or some occasion else for light,  
 And each ungainly line is seen  
 Some special character to mean  
 Of Saint or Prophet, and the whole  
 Blank window is a blazing scroll."

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Cato would not allow any one but the virtuous to be handsome. " Handsome who handsome is, who handsome does is more so," as the line runs in the *Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich*. " Pretty is all very pretty, it's prettier far to be useful."

" No, fair Lady Marian, I say not that ; but I *will* say,  
 Stately is service accepted, but lovelier service rendered,  
 Interchange of service the law and condition of Beauty ;  
 Anyway beautiful only to be the thing one is meant for.

\* \* \* \* \*

Yes she is beautiful, Philip, beautiful even as morning :  
 Yes, it is that which I said, the Good and not the Attractive !  
 Happy is he that finds, and finding does not leave it !"

And when our souls shall leave this dwelling, as Shirley says in *The Traitor*, " the glory of one fair and virtuous action is above all the scutcheons on our tombs or silken banners over us." So Wordsworth's dalesmen trust the lingering gleam of their departed lives to oral record and the silent heart ; depositories faithful and more kind than fondest epitaph ; for, if those fail, what boots the sculptured tomb ?

" The dust is brother to the dust. Seeing which,  
 And this alone, the actions of the just  
 Are lords for ever, and defy the dust."

The monition is urgent to seek, and to ensue it, whatso-



ever is lovely, in the best sense, the abiding one,—a loveliness that will wear well, and escape the tarnish of time. Let them who are passing fair,—that is, surpassing,—remember that the passing also means passing away. The scent of the rose survives by many a long day its ephemeral beauty, the grace of the fashion of which perisheth so soon. The “scented bundles” of hay are described in a haymaking scene of Miss Broughton’s as “sweeter in death than in life, like a good man’s fame.” Only the actions of the just smell sweet and blossom in the dust. And is there any moral hid within the bosom of the rose? In those familiar old *Divine Songs for Children* we find one, and not far to seek. Trite enough it is, but so it deserves to be: matter-of-course it may be, matter-of-fact it should; and if common-place, it can scarcely be too common.

“Then I’ll not be proud of my youth or my beauty,  
 Since both of them wither and fade,  
 But gain a good name by well doing my duty,  
 Which may scent like a rose when I’m dead.”

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### XXXIV.

#### NO NEW THING UNDER THE SUN.

ECCLESIASTES i. 9, 10.

VANITY of Vanities being the Preacher’s proposition, this was one of the corollaries: “The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun.” The note of interrogation follows, challenging exception to that rule: Is there anything whereof it may be said, See, this is new? It hath been already of old time, which was before us.

The business of the world is imitation, Dr. South says ; and that which we call novelty is nothing but repetition. "The figure and motion of the world is circular, and experience no less than mathematics will evince, that as it turns round, the same part must be often in the same place." Marcus Antoninus meditates that a little while is enough to view the world in ; for things are repeated, and come over again apace : Nature treads in a circle, and has much the same face through the course of ages. Nor is it only under the sun that such uniformity prevails. The circling seasons, in their course repeated o'er and o'er, see the same things which they have seen before ;

"The same stars keep their watch, and the same sun  
Runs in the track where he from first hath run ;  
The same moon rules the night ; tides ebb and flow ;  
Man is a puppet, and this world a show ;  
Their old dull follies old dull fools pursue,  
And vice in nothing but in mode is new."

In the celebrated imaginary conversation with Bishop Parker, Andrew Marvell is made to dispute the proverb in many applications of it ; as to there being no new thoughts, for instance, when it might just as well be asserted that there are no new men, because other men existed before, with eyes, mouth, nostrils, chin, and many other appurtenances. But as there are myriads of forms, so are there of thoughts, of the same genus, each taking its peculiar conformation. "Æschylus and Racine, struck by the same idea, would express a sentiment very differently." Every note in music has been sounded frequently ; yet a composition of Marvell's contemporary, Purcell, may be brilliant by its novelty. There are extremely few roots in a language ; yet the language may be varied, and novel too, age after age. "There may be, even in these late days, more originality of thought

. . . than we have yet discovered. The admirers of Homer never dreamt that a man more pathetic, more sublime, more thoughtful, more imaginative, would follow. Yet Shakspeare came." It is the teaching of natural philosophy—see, for instance, the vexed questioners of such works as M. Fournier's *Le Vieux-Neuf: Histoire Ancienne des Inventions et Découvertes Modernes*, or Dutens' older and better-known book,—that ever since the earth has been the earth, and the sun the sun, there has probably been no new thing, speaking physically and materially, in either; the forces and elements of our globe, and of all its brother and sister planets—nay of the sun himself, for that matter,—being the same now as at their first creation: but that with the first appearance of man, there was the advent of a new, because a spiritual nature; and that since his entrance, nothing material has been added or taken away; all nature's essences and potentialities remaining unchanged; but man's wants and desires being continually growing and expanding, he has ever been impelled to discover and invent, that is, to "lay bare" and "find out," more and more of the virtues and uses of whatsoever lay around him. Men are alleged still to exist who believe in the exhaustive wisdom of the extinct lore of the Egyptians, and who imagine that if that bibliothecal bugbear, the Alexandrian library, had been preserved, we should have found the strictest parallelism between ancient and modern literature, science, and art. Some are still to be found who believe, or say they believe, that in the darkness of that remoter than Cimmerian time, "not only pins and needles, printing and gunpowder, but also gigantic bridges and tunnels, crystal palaces and railways, locomotives and marine engines, and most certainly electric or magnetic telegraphs, were as common as with us now." Some words with a

Mummy, by Edgar Allan Poe, are a popular satire on this extreme view ; while, on the other hand, grave inquirers like Sir Henry Holland own it impossible not to be struck with the fact, that modern research is carrying us back to the realization of many ancient opinions, which have hitherto been regarded only as vague hypotheses, without other sanction than the hardness or ingenuity of thought which first suggested them. "All indeed who read, as well as write, on medical topics, will find how difficult it is to attain any opinion or truth that has wholly escaped the genius or labours of those who have gone before,"—this being especially true on every point of theory and general doctrine. No man, says Emerson, can read the history of astronomy without perceiving that Copernicus, Newton, Laplace, are not new men, or a new kind of men, but that Thales, Anaximenes, Hipparchus, Empedocles, Aristarchus, Pythagoras, had anticipated them ; "each had the same tense geometrical brain, apt for the same vigorous computation and logic, a mind parallel to the movement of the world." But admitting that the germs of the ideas which have led in later times to the perfection of giant helps to modern civilization were extant in ancient days, between the germ and the ripe fruit there is a distinction not without a difference. As Mr. Lewes points out, many of those coincidences upon which historical theories are based, turn out, on close inspection, to be merely verbal, or at best approximative. The frequent coincidence in expression of the physical speculations of the Greeks with those of modern science,—does this, he asks, prove that the moderns borrowed their science from the ancients ? "M. Dutens thought so, and has written an erudite but singularly erroneous book to prove it." Democritus, we are reminded, asserted the Milky Way to be only a cluster of stars ; but the asser-



tion was a mere guess, wholly without proof, and gained no acceptance: it was Galileo who "discovered" what Democritus "guessed." Thus also Empedocles, Pythagoras, and Plato are said to have been perfectly acquainted with the doctrine of gravitation; and "this absurdity is made delusive by dint of forced translations, which elicit something like coincidence of expression, although every competent person detects the want of coincidence in the ideas."\* The phrase of Terence is to be taken with a good pinch of salt: *Nullum est nunc dictum, quod sit non dictum prius.*

That History repeats itself, is another applicable phase of the proverb, Nothing new under the sun. Plutarch had a weakness for parallels, historical and biographical; and severer scribes have upheld the theory of cycles in history. In the panorama of the physical and moral world the sacred philosopher is understood to have seen stability and uniformity in the midst of apparent change, and to have deduced one law for the past, the present, and the future. "The thing which hath been is that which shall be, and that which is done is that which shall be done." The same line of thought is recognized as apparent in the Greek theory of the political cycle: monarchy splits into oligarchy; the many revolt against the misrule of the few; democracy in turn is rescued from anarchy by a single head, and so monarchy comes round again. In what are called stationary communities, so far as they are really stationary, there is, modern philosophy agrees, nothing new under the sun, and it may be reasonably believed

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\* Karsten expresses the distinction well: "Empedocles poetice adumbravit idem quod tot seculis postea mathematicis rationibus demonstration est à Newtono."—*Philos. Græcorum Operum Reliquiæ*, p. xii.

that the thing which is done is that which shall be done. "In most ancient nations, through the most violent political vicissitudes, much remained standing and stable, and it was what most concerned the life of man. His customs, his traditions, his beliefs, his manner of life, remained for the most part unaffected, though dynasties were changed and empires were shattered above his head." And it is argued, that had statistics formed a part of ancient philosophy, the regularity or periodicity of social phenomena would have been found much more striking than now: an ancient statistician might have foretold with general accuracy the number of caravans that would cross the desert for a hundred years and the number and sorts of crimes that would be committed by several successive generations in a stationary condition of morals and circumstances. But now the very facts which constitute what is called the progress of society are seen to add greatly to the difficulty of constructing anything like an adequate theory of society and its future. "With the failure of periodicity in the phenomena [of society], the element of the incalculable in human affairs increases." No historical parallel, it has been said, can be absolutely perfect, because no event in history ever exactly repeats itself: the fact that a parallel is a parallel, the fact that two events of different ages or different countries are compared together, will hinder the two events from being exactly alike. But however remote in time and place the two events may be, analogous causes may have been at work in the two cases, bringing about analogous effects, and practical instruction may be drawn from the comparison. A philosophic dissertator on historical cycles concludes that, upon the whole, history does repeat itself a good deal in the various ups and downs of the same nation; but in studying such cycles, the points of

difference must be carefully noted, albeit the fact that we note the points of difference is the surest proof of essential likeness.

Chesterfield is caustic upon those "great scholars" who, "most absurdly," draw their maxims from what they call *Parallels* in the ancient authors; without considering, that, in the first place, there never were, since the creation of the world, two cases exactly parallel; and next, that there never was a case stated, or even known, by any historian, with every one of its circumstances; which, however, ought to be known, in order to be reasoned from. His lordship had known these absurdities carried so far by people of injudicious learning, that he declares he should not be surprised if some of them were to propose, "while we are [1748] at war with the Gauls, that a number of geese should be kept in the Tower," on account of the infinite advantage which Rome received, "in a parallel case," from a certain number of those sage (or sage and onions) birds in the Capitol. He may have laughed, perhaps, in his day—only that pattern of politest peers was above laughter—at so unlucky a hit as Dryden once made in the way of a prophetic parallel, in his poem on the Prince of Wales born on the 10th of June, 1688:

"If our victorious Edward, as they say,  
Gave Wales a prince on that propitious day,  
Why may not years, revolving with his fate,  
Produce his like, but with a longer date;  
One who may carry to a distant shore  
The terror that his famed forefather bore?"

The contest of Civilis with Rome is taken by Mr. Motley as a remarkable foreshadowing of the subject of his history, that future conflict with Spain, through which the Batavian republic, fifteen centuries later, was to be founded. The character, he remarks, the events,

the battles on sea and shore, the desperate sieges, the slippery alliances, the traits of generosity, audacity, and cruelty, the trustful confidence, the broken faith, seem so closely to repeat themselves, that History appears to present the self-same drama played over and over again, with but a change of actors and costume. He descries more than a fanciful resemblance between Civilis and William the Silent, two heroes of ancient German stock, who had learnt the arts of war and peace in the service of a foreign and haughty world-empire; the ambition of each was subordinate to the cause which he served, for both refused the crown, although each, perhaps, contemplated, in the sequel, a Batavian realm of which he would have been the inevitable chief. Both, it is added, offered the throne to a Gallic prince, for Classicus was but the prototype of Anjou, as Brinno of Brederode, and neither was destined in this world to see his sacrifices crowned with success.

Marcus Aurelius averred, that by looking back into history, one might be able to "almost prophesy upon the future," so strangely uniform are things past, present, and to come. "De tout temps les choses en pareil cas se sont passées à peu près de même," says another meditating spirit *sur l'éternelle ressemblance de ces éternelles vicissitudes*. De Quincey cites it as the opinion of one he deems the subtlest and most convincing (if not the most useful) philosopher whom England has produced, that a true knowledge of history confers the gift of prophecy; or that intelligently and sagaciously to have looked backwards, is potentially to have looked forwards. It is admitted for certain that the political movements of nations obey everlasting laws, and travel through the stages of known cycles, which thus insure enough of resemblance to guarantee the general outline of a sagacious prophecy; so that sameness enough there



will always be to encourage the true political seer, with difference enough to confer upon each revolution its own separate character and its peculiar interest. Coleridge complained, that as every age has, or imagines it has, its own circumstances which render past experience no longer applicable to the present case, there are never wanting answers and explanations and specious fallacies of hope. "I well remember," says he in *The Friend*, "that when the examples of former Jacobins, Julius Cæsar, Cromwell, etc., were adduced in France and England, at the commencement of the French Consulate, it was ridiculed as pedantry and pedants' ignorance, to fear a repetition of such usurpation at the close of the enlightened eighteenth century." It was from quite another standpoint that Jeffrey alleged the adage of nothing new under the sun, to be a reflection more and more impressed upon him, the more minutely he was enabled to inform himself of the events and opinions of former times: the same sanguine anticipations, the same groundless alarm, the same indestructible prejudices, and the same infallible panaceas, continue, said he, with slight modifications, to occupy and amuse the spirit of successive generations; while the world goes on in its own grand and undisturbed progression, to the equal disappointment of the enthusiast and the alarmist. Society is ever changing; but amidst the infinite diversity of human affairs, there are, as Alison admits, certain general principles of universal application, and the neglect or observance of which has led, in all ages, to the same consequences.

The historical studies of the Marquis de La Fare led him to the conclusion that history is "*un va-et-vient, un jeu de bascule perpétuel.*" From other sources had Philosopher Chips been led to the theory, that the universe had its cycle of events which turned round, so

that in a certain period of time (27,762 years) everything was to happen over again.

It is one of the poets of our day who gives us to understand that

“ Dame History is so old, she knows not well  
Present from Past. She loves to say her say  
Till it is stale, and the same story tell  
To-morrow as she told it yesterday.”

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### XXXV.

#### THE SEEING EYE.

ECCLESIASTES ii. 14 ; ISAIAH xlii. 20.

THESE be among the words of the Preacher, the son of David, king of Jerusalem : “ The wise man’s eyes are in his head ; but the fool walketh in darkness.” The seeing eye, and the hearing ear, the Lord hath made them both. But there is such a thing as an eye that sees not. There are eyes and eyes ; or, as the well-known title runs, Eyes and No Eyes. “ Seeing many things, but thou observest not,” we read in the prophecies of Isaiah.

Men with an Eye are, in point of phrase, the peculiar people of Mr. Carlyle. In them his soul delighteth, and for him it may be almost said that their might makes right. “ For Ziethen too had good eyesight,” he says of a favourite, in his latest history ; and the next chapter opens with a description of George II., whose “ eyes, proud as Jove’s, are nothing like so perspicacious : and he has to scan with them, and unriddle, under pain of death, such a waste of insoluble intricacies, troubles, and world-perils as seldom was,—even in dreams.” Where no vision is, on the part of rulers, the people perish.

The appeal of Moses to Hobab, not to leave him and his people in the wilderness, urges this reason for his continuance with them, "Thou mayest be to us instead of eyes." Like those of the children of Issachar that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do.

In dealing with such a statesman as Oliver Cromwell, the philosopher of hero-worship finds occasion everywhere to note the decisive practical "eye" of the man, and his genuine "insight" into what is fact. Such an intellect, he maintains, in his defence of Oliver's sincerity, does not belong to a false man: the false man sees false shows, plausibilities, expediencies; the true man is needed to discern even practical truth. Cromwell's counsel about the Parliament army, for instance, early in the contest, "is advice by a man who *saw*. Fact answers, if you see into Fact!" Mirabeau, again: "With rich munificence, in a most blinkard, bespectacled, logic-chopping generation, Nature has gifted this man with an eye." Danton: "This man also, like Mirabeau, has a natural eye,\* and begins to see whither Constitutionalism is tending." Later again, in the *French Revolution* chapter on the Death of Mirabeau: "Of men who, in such sense, are alive, and see with eyes, the number is now not great." In an earlier work Mr. Carlyle had explained the wise man and the strong to be he that has insight into what is what, into what will follow out of what, the eye to see and the hand to do; and it is the heart always that sees, before the head *can* see. The prevailing defect of the age bewailed by him in *Past and Present* is "less a defect of telescopes than of some eyesight. Those superstitious blockheads of the Twelfth

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\* The italics, wherever occurring in these extracts from Mr. Carlyle, are that author's own.

Century," as he ironically characterizes Abbot Samson and his like, "had no telescopes, but they still had an eye." "The clear-beaming eyesight of Abbot Samson, steadfast, severe, penetrating,—it is like *Fiat lux* in that inorganic waste whirlpool;" that is to say, penetrating gradually into all nooks, of the chaos it makes a *kosmos* or ordered world. Elsewhere again he suggestively apostrophizes the reader: "Eyesight *enough*, O reader, a man in that case were a god, and could do various things!" The nature of the being of our great men, he says, in the essay on Johnson, was, "that they lived not by Hearsay, but by clear Vision, . . . saw into the things themselves," etc. Cunning (as Cagliostro's) he declares to be the vehement exercise of a short, poor vision, of an intellect sunk, bemired, which can attain to no free vision, otherwise it would lead the esurient man to be honest. And in the sequel to that essay, *The Diamond Necklace*, a leading theme is the reflection, "Of the eyes that men do glare withal so few can *see*." Quite an anax andrôn is the potentate in Dryden's adaptation of Chaucer, every inch a king,—with

"Eyes that confest him born for kingly sway,  
So keen, they flashed intolerable day."

Applicable in a largely applied sense to the philosophy of veritable insight, is the sententious utterance of Eunapius, that to see with the mere bodily eye is one thing; to perceive with the mind, quite another: "*Ετερον τι ἐστὶ τῷ νῷ θεωρεῖν, καὶ τοῖς τοῦ σώματος ἀπατηλοῖς ὄμμασι*." All too often it happens that, as Churchill words it,

" — the Eye, that nicest sense,  
Neglects to send intelligence  
Unto the Brain, distinct and clear,  
Of all that passes in her sphere"—

a fact overlooked, as are the lessons it may teach, by those who fail to distinguish between eyes and no eyes,



the mere seeing and the observing what is seen, the mere sight of the eyes and the action of reason thereupon—

“Not thinking, though they’re wondrous wise,  
That few have reason, most have eyes.”

And he goes on to say, that where Nature reason doth deny, no art can that defect supply ; whereas, if a man should want an eye or two, are there not quack oculists, equal to the occasion ?—

“As well prepared, beyond all doubt,  
To put eyes in, as put them out.”

The one-eyed is king in the city of the blind. To see clearly with one eye is a not uncommon gift, and restriction, with men accepted in the world as successful and apt for leadership. Their vision is unduly limited, but to the extent of it they see distinctly enough.

David Hartley, in his chapter on the Faculties of Brutes, refers to persons of narrow capacities and acquisitions, who yet excel greatly in some particular pursuit ; showing great ingenuity in their own line of things—a line of length without breadth—and in some others that border thereupon within certain limits ; but “quite lost and confounded” if questioned on alien topics. Like Miss Ophelia, in the American story, they may have a “clear, strong, active mind,” and think with great strength within certain narrow limits ; but overpass those limits, and you overtax their powers. A refined critic has said of Crabbe, that he explored with wonderful accuracy the depths and shallows of minds, however singular, which were of a certain calibre only ; that nothing escaped the keen and penetrating gaze of those inquiring eyes but what was set too far above or beyond their scope. Alison gave Brougham credit for extraordinary intensity of vision for present objects and immediate interests, but pronounced him far from equally clear-sighted as to ultimate consequences, or the permanent

welfare of humanity. Dr. John Brown suggestively says of Art and Science, in his contrasted parallel of the two, that while Art uses one eye, and Science the other, Wisdom uses both, and is stereoscopic, discerning solidity as well as surface, and seeing on both sides ; its vision being the *unum quid* of two images.\* It is all very well for Butler to remind us, in his satire *Upon the Abuse of Human Learning*, that

“ — men that wink with one eye see more true,  
And take their aim much better than with two.”

But for general and practical purposes of vision two are better. And even two “eyes of wall” are better than none, or than one—to apply what the same satirist has to say in *Hudibras* of certain

“ — eyes of wall ;  
I would say eye, for he had but one,  
As most agree, though some say none.”

Mr. Stuart Mill owns to a large tolerance for one-eyed men, provided their one eye is a penetrating one ; if they saw more, they would probably not see so keenly, nor so eagerly pursue one course of inquiry. In Bentham he finds a curious example of what Mr. Carlyle strikingly calls “the completeness of limited men ;” for in the Jeremy aforesaid we have a philosopher happy within his narrow boundary as no man of indefinite range ever was ; who, in respect of poetry, for instance, flatters himself that he is so completely emancipated from the essential law of poor human intellect, by which it can only see one thing at a time well, that he can even turn round upon the imperfection and lay a solemn interdict upon it. Another dissertator on the pursuits of jurisprudence, who calls law a merciless tyrant, which

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\* Bacon, we are reminded, somewhere calls Science and Art a pair of Cyclops, just as Kant calls them twin Polyphemes.

conquers and subdues the strongest heads, observes of the man who has passed his life in the application of positive rules to facts, that he can generally do little else: "His interiors are closed, and like a man long confined in prison his perception of all that is within his reach is sharpened, but his sense of all that is outside is dulled." Mr. Buckle remarks of the English contemporaries of John Hunter, that, prudent, sagacious, but short-sighted, seeing few things at a time, but seeing those things with admirable clearness, they were unable to appreciate his comprehensive speculations. The depreciators of Columbus are characterized by one of his biographers as those politicians of petty sagacity and microscopic eye, who, in all great undertakings, can discern the immediate expense, without having scope of vision to embrace the future profit. A narrow, yet penetrating intellect, observes a practised student of character, sees a certain way into a higher intelligence, but beyond that is in the dark, and that which is beyond may involve the deepest and most distinctive parts of the man. Satire is seen to work constantly in this way—not only the keen pointed satire we find in books, but the frivolous shallow satire of private life—"true as far as it goes, but not attaining to the real inner man at all." Even to be Argus-eyed is nothing so very god-like if each of the plurality of eyes can see but a little way; and the *homo* of Apuleius who is *perspicacior Lynceæ vel Argo, et oculus totus*—eyes all over, or indeed (and rather) all eye—may be purblind as regards depth of vision and real insight. The living creatures of the Apocalypse are full of eyes within. The light of those eyes is a light that never was on sea or shore. Such light is the life of men, as given by Him, the true Light, that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world. Missing which, the light that is in them is darkness; and if so, how

great is that darkness. In this, as in so many other and lower senses, there are eyes and no eyes.

The familiar story of Eyes and No Eyes was a favourite one with the late Baron Alderson, and one he would refer to in enforcing the culture of the "observing faculty," especially when taking one's walks abroad, in field and grove, by the sea-side or along the water-courses. One of this faculty will pause by what seems to the non-observant a barren heap of stones, to examine the wild flower that has forced its way through the crevices; he will, like the old recluse in the Caxton Essays, point with his stick to what seems to his duller-eyed though younger companion to be but empty space, till, looking long and steadily, *he* too sees the gossamer, sailing slow over the niggard stubbles;—in all respects but those of age and seclusion a salient contrast to Wordsworth's picture of one who

"—— travels on, a solitary man;  
His age has no companion. On the ground  
His eyes are turned, and, as he moves along,  
They move along the ground; and evermore,  
Instead of common and habitual sight  
Of fields with rural works, of hill and dale,  
And the blue sky, one little span of earth  
Is all his prospect. Thus, from day to day,  
Bow-bent, his eyes for ever on the ground,  
He plies his weary journey; seeing still,  
And seldom knowing that he sees, some straw,"

or scattered leaf, or wheel-track, and nothing above or beyond. To the same category may be consigned that "hard-featured man in a railway rug," the fellow-traveller for many long miles of another of our well-read essayists, who in vain essayed to interest him on any subject whatever, so mum was the man, though he "could scarcely be silently observing and commenting upon the works of Nature in the landscape without, for he never looked



out of the window, and kept his eyes (staringly wide awake they were) upon one particular check of his railway rug." Perhaps he was not in the vein that day, not in the mood and present tense; and haply he could have gazed eagerly and fixedly had the humour taken him; for to the most and the best of us there are moods and tenses when, as Gresset words it,

" Mille spectacles qu'autrefois  
On voyait avec nonchalance,  
Transportent aujourd'hui, présentent des appas  
Inconnus à l'indifférence,  
Et que la foule ne voit pas."

All increase of insight is justly said to be increase of pleasurable sources. Hence the welcome accorded by the thoughtful to the addition made within the last twenty years to possible pleasures, by the study of such objects as rockpools and wayside ponds—thousands of amateurs having joined professed naturalists so far as to learn at least to look with new and keen interest at any little quiet patch of water with a green, mantling surface, or a margin of water-plants. It is the unobservant alone that never find anything interesting, curious, or wonderful in their path. Almost miraculous is the degree to which the faculty of observation can be cultivated, as Robert Houdin's experience will show. Where the inbred follows upon the inborn, the development is of course abnormal in degree, as perhaps it is to be reckoned in kind also. That "marvellous boy," Edward Forbes, is described by a brother philosopher as taking photographs of everything he sees, upon his retina, the *camera lucida* of his mind,—photographs that never fade, of "every midge that washes its face as a cat does, and preens its wings," and of every lady-bird that alights on his knee, and folds and unfolds "her gauzy pinions under their spotted and glorious lids." Squire Hamley is

pleased and proud to say of his younger son, that "Roger knows a deal of natural history, and finds out queer things sometimes. He'd have been off a dozen times during this [country] walk of ours, if he'd been here: his eyes are always wandering about, and see twenty things where I only see one. Why! I've known him bolt into a copse because he saw something fifteen yards off—some plant, maybe, which he'd tell me was very rare, though I should say I'd seen its marrow at every turn in the woods; and if we came upon such a thing as this," touching a delicate film of a cobweb upon a leaf with his stick as he spoke, "why, he could tell you what insect or spider made it, and if it lived in rotten firewood, or in a cranny of good sound timber, or deep down in the ground, or up in the sky, or anywhere." Miss Tytler, in her Huguenot story, sharpens a contrast between Milly Rolle and Yolande Duprey, in their capacities respectively for profiting by the experiences of Corner Farm. Yolande would have been at home in an English Siberia, and would have found a thousand objects of interest and observation a lifetime before Milly Rolle—making herself acquainted with the local names and the rural annals, and getting at once to be friends with the farm stock entire, so that the "great mild Juno eyes of the oxen" looked into hers with a familiar greeting. Mrs. Norton bears witness to the observant eye of Rogers ("to the keen eye of thy poetic mind") in her poem of *The Winter's Walk* with him:

"And nought escaped thee as we walked along,  
Nor changeful ray, nor bird's faint chirping song."

Happy the nature that even to declining age retains the vivacity of inquiring vision that marks eager childhood, like the mature observer in Montesquieu, who says of himself, "Je suis comme un enfant, dont les organes encore tendres sont vivement frappés par les moindres

objets." A descriptive chapter of *Oldtown Folks* opens with a picturesque vignette of what might be seen at sunrise from a certain cast-iron spinster's bedroom window ; but " not a bit of all this saw Miss Asphyxia, though she looked straight out at it. Her eyes and the eyes of the cow, who, with her horned front, was serenely gazing out of the barn window on the same prospect, were equally unreceptive." It is possible to be horn-eyed, without having a horned front.

Though to want eyes be indeed a great calamity, says Dr. South, yet to have eyes and not to see, adds a sting and a reproach to what would otherwise be but a misfortune. Plato divided mankind into those who have eyes and those who have none, and said that, while explorers of the former class see what comes before them in the course of their travels, because they bring eyes to see it, travellers of the second class return home no wiser than they went. The most powerful telescope, as one of his expositors remarks, is useless if the focus is not rightly adjusted to the eye. Equally so if there is no real seeing power in the eye—no speculation in it, as Macbeth says of Banquo's spiritual vision. An observer of an average crowd of visitors at the International Exhibition ventured to say, that not one in a hundred of them took in a single idea from any object to which the mind had no previous clue : all the strangeness, novelty, and beauty were passed by—were not visible, did not reach the brain, did not even catch the sense of the vacant, bewildered gazer. The majority of all great crowds are likened to the woman who emigrated to America with her husband, and, returning after some years to her native village, was asked what she had seen. " I can't say," she replied, " as I see'd anythink per-tik'lar ;" and if she had followed Humboldt over the world, it is presumed she would have said the same.

M. Nestor Roqueplan insists that a long stay in the country makes the eyes look stupid : the habit of seeing empty spaces, on his showing, gives an idiotic uncertainty, whereas to see shops and passers-by gives it a curiously-inquiring and wide-awake look. To this it has been answered, that not every man is affected by the country in the same way : for example, a man who has studied botany, or geology, or landscape-painting, and is warmly interested in one of these pursuits, or even a man who is interested in agriculture and domestic animals, is sure to find a great deal to arrest his attention even in what may be considered a dull part of the country, still more in districts which are full of what specially interests him. As good observers as the French critic have *not* observed that the students of nature have stupid eyes.

Dr. Arnold complains of that Silanus the Greek historian, who, living with Hannibal daily, might have told us so much, that he "saw and heard without heeding." Where were his eyes? They might have been of glass, glassy, for all they seem to have taken in; or such a pair, say, as that described in the *Odyssey*,—

"Of horn the stiff relentless balls appear,  
Or globes of iron fixed in either sphere."

Or such another, quite another, pair—yet in effect the same mere organic matter—as those of Mackworth Praed's Lilian, who had never known thought and reason—

"So you might guess from her eyes' dim rays,  
And her idiot laugh, and her vacant gaze,  
And the light of her eye so boldly obscure."

The late William Smith, in one of his metaphysical works, commented feelingly on the passive stare, expressive of nothing, so often to be observed in the faces of the labouring poor—let the light fall upon those big dull



eyes from what object it may, they seem to be ever gazing, vacant into vacancy. So again Lord Lytton pictures an old rustic, gazing on space with "that vacant stare which so often characterizes the repose and relaxation of the uneducated poor." Sterne describes "that perplexed vacuity of face which puzzled souls generally stare with." It was accounted one of the main triumphs of Garrick's art, that he could make the twin stars, each a bright particular star, which Nature had stuck in his head, appear as dull as two coddled gooseberries. Like Odysseus, as transformed by Pallas, and as "traded" by Mr. Pope or one of his staff—

"No longer in the heavy eye-ball shined  
The glance divine, forth-beaming from the mind."

Such command over expression has Talfourd's Athenian captive, with her face of "marble solitude," whose large eye once indeed "kindled with frightful lustre ; but the shade

"Passed instant thence ; her face resumed its look  
Of stone."

A sort of dead-alive contrast to the supernatural lustre and eloquence of the pictured eyes gleaming from tarnished frames in Hood's *Haunted House* :

"Not merely with the mimic life that lies  
Within the compass of Art's simulation ;  
Their souls were looking through their painted eyes  
With awful speculation."

What a picture, word-painted, is that other one by Hood of the drowned woman's eyes "staring so blindly ! Dreadfully staring, through muddy impurity, as when with the daring last look of despairing fixed on futurity." Mr. Dickens gives us, in the midst of the dolls with no speculation in their eyes, "the prostrate figure of dead Mr. Dolls with no speculation in his." In Mr. Thackeray's *Virginians* we have Harry Warrington calling Lady

Maria "angel!" and looking into her face with his eager, honest eyes; and although "two fishpools irradiated by a pair of stars would not kindle to a greater warmth than did those elderly orbs into which Harry poured his gaze," he plunged into their blue depths, we are told, and fancied he saw heaven in their calm brightness. To do Lady Maria justice, she does not appear to have forced any particular semblance of expression into the elderly orbs. Some people strain and overstrain their powers in that respect portentously; witness the published portrait of some small author as described by a *Fraser* critic, who declined to believe that there ever lived the man whose eyes could habitually bear that expression of gleaming glare; for only by a violent effort could the expression be produced, and then for a very short time only, without serious injury to the optic nerve. "The eyes were made as large as possible; and the thing after which the poor fellow had been struggling was that peculiar look which may be conceived to penetrate through the beholder, and pierce his inmost thoughts;" just the sort of expression which, in the critic's estimate, might produce a great effect on the gallery of a minor theatre. Or, in high-coloured word-painting, it might tell in sensation fiction, together with such optical aspects as one we get of Dred in the great dismal swamp, his eye fixed before him on vacancy, the pupil swelling out in glassy fulness, with a fixed somnambule stare.

Bielfeld's description of the person of the second of our four Georges includes the item, "big blue eyes, perhaps rather of parboiled character, though proud enough; eyes flush with his face or more, rather 'in relief' than on a level with it,"—so Mr. Carlyle Englishes Bielfeld, and interpolates the characteristic gloss: "*à fleur de tête*, after the manner of a fish, if one

might say so, and betokening such an intellect behind them!" The protuberant large brown eyes of Silas Marner are familiar to George Eliot's readers,—eyes that saw nothing very distinctly that was not close to them, and staring dreadfully at that; stress is laid on the absence of special observation in his pale face, and on that defenceless, deer-like gaze which belongs to large prominent eyes. With change of character comes change of expression; and "the prominent eyes that used to look so trusting and dreamy, now looked as if they had been made to see only one kind of thing that was very small, like tiny grain, for which they hunted everywhere." A recent dissertator on short sight is eloquent upon the stony stare, the lack-lustre eye, which seems somehow never in focus with the eye that looks into it, and suggests the soulless gaze of a photograph. He takes the terrible Gorgo, whose glance turned all who looked upon her into stone, to have been simply the short-sighted girl; the same idea being implied in the three Gorgones having but one eye between them. In the case of her modern representative, of either sex, who, it is asked, can well help feeling, under that fixed and glassy stare, the kindliness of his nature rapidly turn to ice? Who, it is further asked, has not felt, at a dinner-party even, the numbing, freezing influence where a single gorgon or spectre, if not more, sits, so to say, statue-like, the soul to all appearance drawn into itself, dull to the nervous efforts of host or hostess, turning away just as you think you have caught a look to open a conversation withal? "The very lover 'sighing his soul into his lady's face' fails, with all his conscious glow of rapture and all his beseeching looks, to kindle one glance of intelligence, or to catch one responsive or sympathetic sign. He feels himself gradually, but almost inevitably, turned to stone." But those short-

sighted eyes of Mr. Gage, in Miss Tytler's fiction, are declared by Yolande to resemble nothing but the evening star when the dew is falling ; and Grand'mère assents to the resemblance, and admires them too as eyes with a short sight for the present, and a far sight for the future. No marvel to her that they are both unfathomable and effulgent, "for they have done as great things as the Italian who went down into the Inferno—they have looked into eternity, those eyes, and it is reflected in their glance." For some that supernatural vision is too much, and the brain turns, and the eye becomes vacant. Mr. Reade pictures the face of a maniac, whose eyes, bereft of reason, conveyed no images to the sentient brain; it is a face seen at the window of an asylum, and by some half-vegetable instinct this darkened man has turned towards the morning sun, and is staring it full in the face: the rays strike and sparkle on those glassy orbs, and fire them ; yet they never so much as wink. Janet Dempster is painted with wide-open black eyes that had a strangely-fixed sightless gaze, as she paused in the street, and stood silent before her brutal husband. So again George Eliot's Sir Christopher, after a single day and night of grief have aged the fine old man, is described as changed in complexion to a dull and withered look, with a swollen ridge under the eyes ; "and the eyes themselves, which used to cast so keen a glance on the present, had the vacant expression which tells that vision is no longer a sense, but a memory." On an after page we read of Maynard Gilfil shocked at the aspect of Tina "with madness in her eyes, looking and looking, and yet not seeing him." So the Carlingford needlewoman, in *Salem Chapel*, is described, standing opposite to Vincent, "gazing with eyes that went beyond that figure, and yet dwelt upon it." "The eyes in their blank brightness paused at him for a



moment before they passed to the vacant air on which they were always fixed." So with Sarah in the *Dead Secret*, when Uncle Joseph, starting to his feet, asks her is she ill? "She turned round slowly, and looked at him with eyes void of all expression, with eyes that seemed to be staring through him vacantly at something beyond." Delaroche's painting of Napoleon before his abdication at Fontainebleau moves the author of *Horæ Subsecivæ* to a bit of word-painting on the subject of the eyes,—the Emperor's whole mind looking through them,—bodily distress, want of sleep, fear, doubt, shame, astonishment, anger, speculation, seeking rest but as yet finding it not; going over all possibilities, calm, confounded, but not confused. All this the critic discerns in those grey, serious, perplexed eyes; nor does he remember to have ever seen "anything at once so subtle awful, and touching, as their *dreary* look." How different from that pair in the broad head of Dr. Chalmers, which the same observer elsewhere describes as not vacant, but asleep—innocent, mild, and large; the soul within not always at that window, but often seemingly conspicuous by its absence. Of the Olivia Marchmont of fiction we read, "There was no speculation in those large lustreless eyes, fixed upon the dim light of the candles. But, for all that, the mind was not a blank." To the same pen we owe the portrait of a veteran detective, the fixed expression of whose face is a stony glare, the relentlessness of his gaze having very little relation to the object at which he gazes. When he is listening with all his might, he has a trick of looking away from the speaker, and staring out of the window, with a stolid glare in his eyes that tells no tales, unless to those who know him of old. It is his policy to cultivate the mien of that Mr. Keckwitch in another tale, who is described as looking at his employers with eyes that had no more speculation

in them than if they had been boiled. Such eyes pass muster in the crowd, if we may take Sir Gilbert's word for it in the play, when he tells how Parson Dosey's right eye dropped into the fish-tray as he was playing a pool of quadrille with three elderly maidens; and how astonished they all were, the knight included; "for none of us had ever discovered the defect, although he has been in the parish for so many years; but in a twinkling he whipped it into the socket; and when I looked him in the face," why, protests Sir Gilbert in his own emphatic diction, there was just as much meaning in that eye, as in every other about the table.

One of Mrs. Oliphant's heroes looks at an adviser with "those sceptical, clear-sighted eyes, which, more than anything else, make a practical man ashamed of having indulged in any momentary aberration." What a pair of wide-awake, dangerous eyes! exclaims Dr. John Brown of a certain pair that have no "speculation" in them, no looking before or after, but looking into the present—the immediate. Coleridge somewhere likens certain critical eyes to those of the Indian spider, *aranea prodigiosa*, as becoming in effect clouded microscopes, to exaggerate and distort. Lovers of his poems may recall the line in *Christabel*, "Why stares she with unsettled eye?" said of Geraldine. Students of his *Aids to Reflection* may recall his analysis of an eye as it lies on the marble slab of a dissecting room,—and the query, "Is this cold jelly the light of the body?" And who can forget Jean Paul's tremendous dream, when he looked up to the immeasurable world for the Divine *Eye*, and it glared upon him with an empty, black, bottomless *Eye-socket*? As much more appalling than those "open eyes," in Shelley,

"— whose fixed and glassy light

Mocked at the speculation they had owned,"

as eternity is than time.

## XXXVI.

### BEAUTIFUL IN SEASON.

ECCLESIASTES iii. 1, 11.

TO everything there is a season, the Preacher instructs us, and a time to every purpose under the heaven. And he who notably had seen the travail which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it, had this to add : “ He hath made everything beautiful in his time.” Everything. A comprehensiveness exceeding that of the moonlight meditation in Shakspeare,—

“ How many things by season seasoned are  
To their right praise and true perfection.”

*Les belles choses*, says La Bruyère, *le sont moins hors de leur place : les bienséances mettent la perfection*. Sounds inharmonious in themselves and harsh, says Cowper, yet heard in scenes where peace for ever reigns, and only there, please highly for their sake. Barry Cornwall poetizes a remonstrance with the nightingale for singing at midday ; he would have the strain delayed till downy Eve into her twilight woods hath flown : the “ holy ” strain, he calls it, that should be listened to when other sounds are hushed :

“ The insect noise, the human folly  
Disturb thy grave thoughts with their din.  
Then cease awhile, bird Melancholy,  
And when the fond Night hears,—begin.”

Had not Portia said long before, in the lines preceding the very passage previously quoted on things seasonable, that the nightingale, if she should sing by day, when every goose is cackling, would be thought no better a musician than the wren? The Biron of *Love's Labour's Lost* touches on the same theme when he protests,

"At Christmas I no more desire a rose  
Than wish a snow in May's new-fangled shows ;  
But like of each thing that in season grows."

In the spring, is a *Locksley Hall* reminder, a fuller crimson comes upon the robin's breast ; in the spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another crest ; in the spring a livelier iris changes on the burnished dove ; and beautiful is the season, and beautiful are the changes wrought by it, for the season's sake. But, as Archdeacon Hare has somewhere said, the locks which curl so gracefully round the downy glowing cheeks of the child, would ill become the man's furrowed brow, and must grow white in time ; and then too they will have a beauty of their own, if the face express that sobriety and calmness and purity which accord with them. Says the King in *Hamlet*—and many are the good things even King Claudius can say, how many soever the bad ones he may have done,—

"Youth no less becomes  
The light and careless livery that it wears,  
Than settled age his sables and his weeds."

Youth, says Currer Bell, has its romance, and maturity its wisdom, as morning and spring have their freshness, noon and summer their power, night and winter their repose. "Each attribute is good in its own season." Every qualification, says Miss Austen, is raised at times, by the circumstances of the moment, to more than its real value.

"Ev'ry season hath its pleasures ;  
Spring may boast her flow'ry prime,  
Yet the vineyard's ruby treasures  
Brighten autumn's sob'rer time."

But the daisy, as Mr. Peacock argues, has more beauty in the eyes of childhood than the rose in those of maturer life. The spring is the infancy of the year ;



its flowers are the flowers of promise ; those of autumn are little loved, and less praised. The wisdom of winter is the folly of spring, was a maxim with Dr. Arnold. The many advantages of the calm autumn of life, as well as of the year, are commented on by Mrs. Montagu in one of her letters to Lord Kames (in 1782). Both have a peculiar serenity—a genial tranquillity, she says : we are less busy and agitated, because the hope of the spring and the vivid delights of the summer are over ; but these tranquil seasons have their appropriate enjoyments, and “a well-regulated mind sees everything beautiful that is in the order of nature.” Yet was it a pet and practical axiom with this Lady of the Last Century, that life never knows the return of spring, and that the young should be encouraged in gathering the primroses of their time.

It is in one of the same celebrated lady's letters of appeal for contributions to her “feather-hangings” (recorded in Cowper's verse) that, praying a correspondent to reserve the feathers of the Michaelmas goose for her purposes—the neck and breast feathers of that brave bird being so very useful—she delivers herself of the reflection, “Things homely and vulgar are sometimes more useful than the elegant, and the feathers of the goose may be better adapted to some occasions than the plumes of the phoenix.” And the sentiment is æsthetical, not utilitarian.

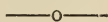
“Colours seen by candle-light  
Will not look the same by day.”

Dewdrops, in Coleridge's pathetic metaphor, are the gems of morning, but the tears of mournful eve.

“Even for our kitchens  
We kill the fowl in season,”

pleads Isabella, in deprecation of Angelo's sentence on

Claudio out of season,—for her brother is “not prepared for death,”—and shall we serve heaven with less respect than we do minister to our gross selves, in the seasonable choice of a chicken? A very homely illustration may sometimes point a weighty moral.



## XXXVII.

## A TIME TO LAUGH.

ECCLESIASTES iii. 4.\*

LIFE has been called a comedy to those who think, a tragedy to those who feel. But life is no laughing matter to those who both think and feel, in any deep sense of either thinking or feeling. Studied in the light of reason and of revelation, life is far from provocative of laughter. Even the laughter it provokes as a comedy is confessedly cynical. The Bible and Broad Grins will hardly do bound up together. Nevertheless, it is something for lovers of a good laugh to be able to quote Scripture warrant for it. The most melancholy book of all the books which make up the Book of books recognizes “a time to laugh.” A good laugh, then, in a good sense, can plead the express sanction of Scripture. A word spoken in due season, how good is it! and a good laugh, if only within reason and in due season, *how* good is that, too! Out of season, and out of all reason, just proportionably bad.

To laugh in church, or at a funeral, is perhaps as unseasonable a feat as can well be named. Yet were

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\* For another collection of illustrative comments on this passage, see First Series of *Secular Annotations on Scripture Texts*, pp. 296-300.

it against both reason and charity to infer exceptional culpability in culprits of this degree, if, by constitution and circumstances combined, overtaken with a fault so deplorable. Themselves may be the foremost to deplore, and yet the first to do it again. Lamb tells Southey of his having been at Hazlitt's marriage, and nearly being turned out several times during the ceremony: "Anything awful makes me laugh. I misbehaved once at a funeral." He could read about these ceremonies with pious and proper feelings. But to him the realities of life seemed only the mockeries. That came of his being a born humorist, with a spice of the metaphysician too. In his essay on a Wedding, Elia professes to know not what business he had to be present in solemn places; for divest himself he could not of an unseasonable disposition to levity upon the most awful occasions. He was the man of men to have made allowances for, and *not* to have put into a lunatic asylum, that Mr. Robinson, the cynic, whom we meet with as an inmate of *Shirley Hall Asylum*, and who *would* burst into violent fits of laughter in church and at funerals. Discharged from confinement as cured, and asked whether he considered himself perfectly safe from a return of the habit of laughing at serious subjects, that gentleman declared himself confident about it, except on one point; on the subject of laughing in church he was still apprehensive, and for this reason:—he had once heard a clergyman deploring the total absence, in a congregation, of conventional signs of the effect which the sermon is producing: "The jester knows the effect of his jest by the laugh that follows it; the actor gets his applause or hisses; the member of Parliament his cheers or cries of 'question.'"<sup>2</sup> But the preacher has no index whatever; and this clergyman had expressed a wish that his congregation had tails, which they could wag "without dis-

turbing the silence of the place or the solemnity of the scene." Now Mr. Robinson could never get over this ; every sermon he afterwards listened to was for him spoilt by it. "If a pet parson entered the pulpit, I immediately saw all the feminine tails wagging. If he spoke of the duties of children to their parents, all the senile male tails wagged ; if of the duties of servants to their superiors, all the matronly tails were in agitation. And after a long dull sermon, when all bent forward to offer up their last prayer, there appeared a simultaneous wagging of all the tails of the congregation. The return of this feeling I alone fear."

John Wesley regarded as clearly supernatural the "great laughter that prevailed in the congregation" at one time when he was preaching ; whereas his brother Charles, less credulous, was once and again able to detect an imposition, where John could only see a miracle. When both brothers were in what Southey calls "the first stage of their enthusiasm," they used to spend part of each Sunday in walking in the fields and singing psalms ; and upon one such occasion, just as they were beginning to set the stave, a sense of the ridiculous overcame Charles, who burst into a hearty and prolonged guffaw. "I asked him," says John, "if he was distracted, and began to be very angry, and presently after to laugh as loud as he. Nor could we possibly refrain, though we were ready to tear ourselves in pieces, but were forced to go home without singing another line." Hysterical laughter, and that laughter which is as contagious as the act of yawning, when the company are in tune for it, Wesley believed to be the work of the devil—one of the many points in which Southey takes the parallel to hold good between "the enthusiasm of the Methodists and of the Papists." We are referred, for instance, to a grand diatribe of St. Pachomius against



laughing; but also to what is told in the *Acta Sanctorum* of the beatified Jordan, second general of the Dominicans, who treated an hysterical affection of this kind with a degree of "prudence and practical wisdom not often to be found in the life of a Romish saint." Witness his treatment of the novices who laughed in the face of the congregation, contagiously and consumedly: *unus cœpit ridere, et alii hoc videntes similiter fortiter incepterunt ridere*. Reproved by a superior, and commanded straitly and straightway to desist from that indecent outbreak, they only laughed on, and laughed the more: *at illi magis ac magis ridebant*. The service over, Jordan rebuked the rebuker for his rebuke, and turning to the novices said, "Laugh away with all your might; I give you full licence. In good truth, you ought to laugh and be merry, forasmuch as you have made your way out of the devil's prison, and that the hard chains are snapped asunder by which for many years he held you bound. Laugh away, then, beloved, laugh away." *Ridete, ergo, carissimi, ridete*. And the laughers are said to have been so comforted in mind by these words, that from that time forth they never could laugh beyond bounds or intemperately: *et post ridere dissolutè non potuerunt*.

When the Princess Elizabeth, daughter of James I., accompanied to the altar, in the chapel at Whitehall, that ill-starred bridegroom, the Elector Palatine, afterwards the "struggling King of Bohemia," she could not help laughing out loud at something which tickled her fancy. Dr. Chalmers "burst out" at a ludicrous incident at his own wedding—"a business that is often accompanied with tears" being thus converted into "a perfect frolic." That Maréchal de Boufflers whom Saint-Simon designates as the gravest and most serious man in all France, and the greatest slave to decorum, broke out into laughter once while in attendance on the Grand

Monarque at mass—the cause effective of this defect being a whispered sally of satirical song ; and when His Most Christian Majesty turned round in surprise to see whence came those unseasonable sounds, that surprise was greatly augmented by his finding who the culprit was, and beholding such a personage shaking himself all to fits, and the tears running down his cheeks. Aspasia, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Maid's Tragedy*, deprecating a “timeless smile,” protests,

“It were a fitter hour for me to laugh  
When at the altar the religious priest  
Were pacifying the offended powers  
With sacrifice.”

But laughter at such unfit times is notoriously on record. More than one of the Latin epigrammatists paraphrase the saw of the Greek gnomic poet,

Γέλως ἄκαιρος ἐν βροτοῖς δεινὸν κακόν.

But when did such sententious philosophy avail to prevent a sudden burst of laughter from a tickled midriff? Thomas Hood cites his own experience of “laughter mingling with lamentation in the chamber of death” itself. Henry Nelson Coleridge frankly avowed his “ungovernable tendency to laughter upon the most solemn occasions.” Every one, Sir Walter Scott says, has felt that when a paroxysm of laughter has seized him at a misbecoming time and place, the efforts which he makes to suppress it,—nay, the very sense of the impropriety of giving way to it,—tend only to augment and prolong the irresistible impulse. “The inclination to laugh becomes uncontrollable, when the solemnity and gravity of time, place, and circumstances render it peculiarly improper.” Judge Haliburton’s travelled Yankee declares that “stiflin’ a larf a’most stifles oneself, that’s a fact.” *Casus plane deplorabilis!* used to be the cry of the doctor in *Martinus Scriblerus* when a case of immoderate laugh-

ter was submitted to him ; and he would give such patients over when he considered what an infinity of muscles "these laughing rascals" threw into a convulsive motion at the same time ; whether we regard the spasms of the diaphragm and all the muscles of respiration, the horrible *ricтус* of the mouth, the distortion of the lower jaw, the crisping of the nose, twinkling of the eyes, or spherical convexity of the cheeks, with the "tremulous succussion" of the whole human body. One main characteristic of the Prussian Tobacco-Parliament immortalized by Mr. Carlyle, was roaring laughter, huge, rude, and somewhat vacant, as that of the Norse gods over their ale at Yule time ; "as if the face of the Sphynx were to wrinkle itself in laughter ; or the fabulous Houyhnhms themselves were there to mock in their peculiar fashion," at such horseplay as never elsewhere was seen. Mr. Forster describes Goldsmith's as a laugh ambitious to compete with Johnson's, which Tom Davies, with an enviable knowledge of natural history, compared to the laugh of a rhinoceros ; and which appeared to Boswell, in their midnight walkings, to resound from Temple Bar to Fleet Ditch. Dr. Parr may have wished to compete with the elder and every way greater Doctor in that as in other respects,—judging by what De Quincey relates of his "obstreperous laugh—so monstrously beyond the key of good society." *Ridentem catuli ore Gallicani*—the picture is a pretty one in neither sex, and the din is distracting. Charles Lamb, in one of his letters, tells a correspondent of a visit he has lately had at his office, from an eccentric acquaintance, who laughed at his own joke with "a laugh which I did not think the lungs of mortal man were competent to. It was like a thousand people laughing, or the Goblin Page." He imagined afterwards, it seems, that the whole office had been laughing at him, so strange did his

own sounds strike upon his "*nonsensorium*." The burst might have been likened, not merely to that of Scott's Goblin Page in the *Lay*, but to that of the "strange extravagant laughter" in Hood's *Forge*, or romance of the iron age,

"— a bellow of demon mirth, that far outroars the weather,  
As if all the hyænas that prowl the earth had clubbed their  
laughs together."

Leigh Hunt, when an inmate of Surrey Gaol, after the Government prosecution, appears to have been almost equally impressed by Haydon's laugh, even within prison walls: "He was here yesterday morning before I was up, calling for his breakfast, and sending those laughs of his about the place that sound like the trumpets of Jericho, and threaten to have the same effect,"—namely, bring down the walls. The Shepherd in the *Noctes* is graphic about a guffaw, when he defines it to be "that lauchter that torments a' the inside o' the listener and looker-on, an internal earthquake that convulses a body frae the pow till the paw, frae the fingers till the feet, till a' the pent-up power o' risibility bursts out through the mouth, like the lang-smouldering fire vomited out o' the crater o' a volcawno, and then the astonished warld hears, for the first time, what heaven and earth acknowledge by their echoes to be indeed—a guffaw!" Christopher North, in his *Winter Rhapsody*, cries fie on the "atrocious wickedness" of a great big, hearty, huge, hulking horse-laugh, in an assemblage of ladies and gentlemen gathered gracefully together to enjoy the courtesies, the amenities, the urbanities and the humanities of cultivated Christian life: "the pagan who perpetuates it should be burnt alive—not at a slow fire,—though that would be but justice,—but at a quick one, that all remnants of him and his enormity may be speedily extinguished." Sir Charles Grandison's



Hon. Miss Byron is impatient of Miss Barnevelt as a "loud and fearless laugher. She hardly knows how to smile; for as soon as anything catches her fancy, her voice immediately bursts her lips, and widens her mouth to its full extent." Ben Jonson's Clerimont is equally impatient: "Oh, you shall see some women, when they laugh, you would think they brayed, it is so rude," etc. The long dry see-saw of such a horrible bray is Hartley Coleridge's text for a denunciation of harsh boisterous laughter, which he compares to the winding-up of a crazy church-clock, the hysterics of a "mastiff-bitch," the lamentations of a patient in hydrophobia, and the Christmas psalmody of a catarrh-caught and coughing congregation. Not that he for one moment agrees with those pious Fathers who attributed all extempore laughing to the agency of evil spirits; but the mere mechanical convulsion of leathern lungs, uninformed by imagination or feeling, was justly an offence to him. Lebrun's advice is stringent, "Gardez-vous d'un sot rire; il n'est rien de plus sot." There is nothing, says Goethe, in which people more betray their character than in what they find to laugh at. The vacant, inane, causeless, but exuberant laughter of Mrs. Palmer in Miss Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*, is by no means unique: "Elinor could have forgiven everything but her laugh." Nothing, in Hazlitt's estimate, is more troublesome than what are called laughing people—the professed laugher being as contemptible and tiresome a character as the professed wit, of whom the one is always contriving something to laugh at, the other always laughing at nothing. "An excess of levity is as impertinent as an excess of gravity." Spenser's picture is to the purpose, of one

" — who did assay

To laugh at shaking of the leaves light."

Nothing sillier than silly laughter, says Martial: *Risu*

*inepto res ineptior nulla est*,—and by *inepto* is meant misplaced, in effect unseasonable, out of due time and course, without justifying occasion, and therefore irrational, and by implication imbecile. A philosophic writer has said that the true character of earnestness is to laugh if there is anything to cause laughter, and not to laugh if there is nothing to laugh at. A French one says, that some folks laugh equally at what is ludicrous and what is not : if you are a fool, for instance, and give vent to some characteristic folly, they laugh at you ; if you are a wise man, and give utterance to nothing but what accords with reason and good sense, they laugh at you all the same. *Risus abundat in ore stultorum*. George Herbert's counsel is,

“ Laugh not too much : the witty man laughs least :  
For wit is news only to ignorance.”

Molière's Cléonte puts a question that answers itself (in the negative) when he asks, “ Vois-tu rien de plus impertinent que des femmes qui rient à tout propos ? ” In Shakspeare we have varied representations of laughter in excess—in those irrepressibly prolonged fits such as Sydney Smith and Tom Moore could indulge in together, even in the public streets, or such as, in his milder and more retired way, Cowper was capable of, as when he “ lay awake half the night in convulsions of laughter ” at the story of John Gilpin, which Lady Austen had that evening related to him at Olney, with a vivacity and archness all her own. The merry lords, for instance, in *Love's Labour's Lost*, who

“ — all did tumble on the ground,  
With such a zealous laughter so profound,  
That in this spleen ridiculous appears,  
To check their folly, passion's solemn tears ”—

a suggestive example of extremes meeting, and of the affinity of conflicting forces, in this strangely composite

nature of ours. There is Jaques, again, in *As You Like It*, so tickled by the philosophy of the motley fool he met in the forest, that, says he, describing the colloquy with Touchstone,

"My lungs began to crow like chanticleer, . . .  
And I did laugh, sans intermission,  
An hour by his dial."

When Jaques, in a later act of the play, owns to the justice of Rosalind's charge, of his being by repute a melancholy fellow,—“I am so; I love it better than laughing,”—she rejoins, “Those that are in extremity of either, are abominable fellows; and betray themselves to every modern censure, worse than drunkards.” *Ne quid nimis*, whether of the ludicrous or the lugubrious, whether of grinning or of gloom. Iachimo is but libelling Posthumus when he pictures him to Imogen as “the jolly Briton,” laughing from his “free lungs,” and crying, “O! can my sides hold!” with “his eyes in flood with laughter.” In *Troilus and Cressida*, “there was such laughing!—Queen Hecuba laughed, that her eyes ran over,” and even “Cassandra laughed,” and Hector, “and all the rest so laughed;” while in another scene we have Patroclus tickling Achilles with his scurril jests and burlesque mimicries, at which “fusty stuff,—

"The large Achilles, on his pressed bed lolling,  
From his deep chest laughs out a loud applause :  
. . . and at this sport  
Sir Valour dies ; cries, Oh !—enough, Patroclus ;  
Or give me ribs of steel ! I shall split all  
In pleasure of my spleen."

But Shakspeare's own welcome of good hearty laughter in season and within reason, and his scant reverence for total abstainers from it, on principle, or by a defect or a twist in their temperament, are seen in passages by the score. He might not go all the way with his mercurial

Gratiano when *he* elected to play the fool, and would have old wrinkles come with mirth and laughter; but Shakspeare used Gratiano as his own mouthpiece when declaiming against

“ — a sort of men whose visages  
Do cream and mantle, like a standing pond;  
And do a wilful stillness entertain,”

for the sake of being reputed too grave for a passing chuckle, too wise for even a flitting smile. Portia, in the same play, declares she had rather be married to a death's head with a bone in his mouth, than to one of this sort, the County Palatine to wit, who “hears merry tales, and smiles not,” and who is like to prove the weeping philosopher when he is old, so full of unmanly sadness in his youth. Cowper is didactic on the *via media*, the golden mean:

“For tell some men that, pleasure all their bent,  
And laughter all their work, life is misspent,  
Their wisdom bursts into the sage reply,  
Then mirth is sin, and we should always cry.  
To find the medium asks some share of wit,  
And therefore 'tis a mark fools never hit.”

In Peter Damiani's black account of the sins which he had to struggle against, one is “disposition to laughter.” Now, true religion, as interpreted by a later theologian, wages no abstract war against any part of man's nature, but gives to each its due subordination or supremacy, breathing sweetness and purity through all. A sober view of human life, he contends, will show that to “proscribe the jocose side of our nature would be a blunder as grievous in its way as to proscribe love between men and women.” There are times and places when we cannot, as well as may not, laugh; but it is by no means the highest state always to stifle laughter. That rather belongs, he argues, to the stiff precisian, who fears to betray something false within him, and habitually wears



a mask, lest his heart be too deeply exposed ; while the true-hearted fearlessly yields to his impulse, and "no more wishes to hide it from the All-seeing eye, than a child would hide his childish sports from the eye of a father." Dr. O. W. Holmes satirizes, in *Nux Postcænetica*, the exacting stringency of some governing powers :

" Besides—my prospects— don't you know that people won't employ  
A man that wrongs his manliness by laughing like a boy? . . .  
It's a vastly pleasing prospect, when you're screwing out a laugh,  
That your very next year's income is diminished by a half."

To say that solemnity is an essential of greatness, that no great man can have other than a rigid vinegar aspect of countenance, never to be thawed or warmed by billows of mirth, Mr. Carlyle very explicitly declines. For his teaching is, that there are things in this world to be laughed at, as well as things to be admired ; and that his is no complete mind, that cannot give to each sort its due. It might be the Plea of other "good people" than the Midsummer Fairies :

" Beshrew those sad interpreters of nature,  
Who gloze her lively universal law,  
As if she had not formed our cheerful feature  
To be so tickled with the slightest straw."

Dr. Young seems more than half inclined to pronounce laughter wholly immoral. Half-immoral he does explicitly and deliberately and emphatically term it:—

" Laughter, though never censured yet as sin,  
(Pardon a thought that only seems severe)  
Is half-immoral. Is it much indulged?  
By venting spleen, or dissipating thought,  
It shows a scorner, or it makes a fool ;  
And sins, as hurting others or ourselves.  
'Tis pride, or emptiness, applies the straw  
That tickles little minds to mirth effuse ;  
Of grief approaching, the portentous sign !  
The house of laughter makes a house of woe."

Sombrius is Addison's name for one of those "sons of sorrow" who think themselves obliged in duty to be sad and disconsolate, and who look on a sudden fit of laughter as a breach of their baptismal vow, who sigh at the conclusion of a merry story, and grow devout when the rest of the company grow pleasant. If we may believe our logicians, pleads Mr. Spectator, man is distinguished from all other creatures by the faculty of laughter. He has a heart capable of mirth, and naturally disposed to it; and it is the business of virtue, not to extirpate the affections of the mind, but to regulate them; it may moderate and restrain, but was not designed to banish gladness from the heart of man. "A man would neither choose to be a hermit nor a buffoon: human nature is not so miserable as that we should be always melancholy, nor so happy as that we should be always merry." A crabbed crew is that depicted in Mr. Luttrell's octosyllabics:

"No smile is on their lips, no word  
Of cheerful sound among them heard,  
As if all virtue lay in gravity,  
And smiles were symptoms of depravity."

Grave as might be Milton's elder manhood, in his youth at least he was the academical apologist of hearty laughter, "most abundant and free." He then at least could and would have echoed the French bard's *J'aime le rire*,—

"Non le rire ironique aux sarcasmes moqueurs  
Mais le doux rire honnête ouvrant bouches et cœurs,  
Qui montre en même temps des âmes et des perles."

It is of about the least estimable of all the character portraits in his noble gallery, that Scott tells us that "his laugh never exceeded a sarcastic smile." But the same sort of thing is told of many real people, good people too, and some of them even great. A smile is

said to have been the utmost that ever played over the lips of the "intensely melancholy" Plato; he never laughed. ("As sad as Plato," became a phrase with the comic dramatists.) Phocion was never once by the Athenians seen to laugh (or, for the matter of that, to cry either). Plutarch says of Cato, "Scarce anything could make him laugh; and it was but rarely that his countenance was softened to a smile." Yet the same biographer incidentally mentions afterwards that Cato "used always to laugh when he told the story" of his reception at Antioch. Montesquieu, in the *Persian Letters*, makes Usbek affirm the existence in Turkey of families where, from father to son, since the kingdom began, not a soul has ever laughed, *personne n'a ri*.

It is an old-world story of Crassus, the grandsire of Marcus the wealthy Roman, that he never laughed but once in all his life, and that was at sight of an ass eating thistles. Julius Saturninus, son of the Emperor Philip the Arabian, is asserted never to have laughed at anything at all,—asinine or what not. It was said of Philip IV. of Spain, that he never in his life laughed out, except at the recital of the story of the Queen of Spain having no legs. Lord Sandys, Sir Robert Walpole's successor as finance-minister, was said by Horace to have never laughed but once, and that was when his best friend broke his thigh. A Parliamentary prig from his cradle, perhaps, after the type of that Mr. Pynsent whom Pendennis taxes with having never laughed since he was born, except three times at the same joke of his chief. Swedenborg was never seen to laugh, though he is allowed to have always had a cheerful smile on his countenance. Swift smiled seldom, laughed never. Madame de Motteville noted *avec étonnement*, of Lewis the Fourteenth, that even "*dans ses jeux et dans ses divertissements ce prince ne riait guère.*" Fontenelle never laughed; and being inquir-

ingly told so by Madame Geoffrin, "No," was his reply, "I have never uttered an Ah! ah! ah!" *That* was his idea of laughter: he could be moved to a faint smile indeed by *choses fines*, but was incapable of any lively feeling whatever. Sainte-Beuve remarks of him, that as he had never uttered an *ah! ah! ah!* so neither had he an *oh! oh! oh!*—that is to say, he had never admired. Nothing of the kind could be alleged of that predecessor and namesake of the Grand Monarque, the ninth of the name, and canonized a Saint; or again of that yet earlier one, the Debonaire, who "never raised his voice in laughing, not even on occasions of public rejoicing," when jesters set and kept his table in a roar, "*he* not even smiling so as to show his white teeth." La Rochefoucauld, in his *Portrait fait par lui-même*, was no less scrupulous to avow himself melancholy, and never laughing more than one laugh *per annum*, than Rousseau was to disavow a letter imputed to him which made him declare he had not laughed more than once or twice in his life; the forgers of which epistle, he averred, could not have known him in his younger days, or such a notion would never have crossed their brain. Jean-Jacques had no ambition to be taken for the sort of man mine host of Ben Jonson's *New Inn* is keen to practise upon, if so be he can but "spring a smile upon this brow,

"That, like the rugged Roman alderman,  
Old master Cross, surnamèd Ἀγέλαστος,  
Was never seen to laugh, but at an ass."

Referring in one of his *Spectators* to what he calls "men of austere principles" who look upon mirth as too wanton and dissolute for a state of probation, and as filled with a certain triumph and insolence of heart, that is inconsistent with a life exposed at every moment to the greatest dangers, Addison cites the observation of



writers of this complexion, "that the sacred person who was the great pattern of perfection was never seen to laugh."\* The "conceit" is discussed, or rather touched upon in passing, by Sir Thomas Browne, in the seventh book of *Vulgar Errors*—a conceit "sometimes urged as a high example of gravity. And this is opinioned because in Holy Scripture it is recorded He sometimes wept, but never that He laughed. Which, howsoever granted, it will be hard to conceive how He passed His younger years and childhood without a smile, if as divinity affirmeth, for the assurance of His humanity unto men, and the concealment of His divinity from the devil, he passed this age like other children, and so proceeded until He evidenced the same. And surely herein no danger there is to affirm the act or performance of that, whereof we acknowledge the power and essential property; and whereby indeed He most nearly convinced the doubt of His humanity." One of Sir Thomas Browne's commentators hereupon remarks that "the doubt of His humanity was convinced soe many other wayes (before His passion)," that "the propertye of risibilitye (which is indeed the usuall instance of the schooles) though it bee inseparable from the nature of man, and incommunicable to any other nature, yet itt does not infer the necessitie of the acte in every individuall subject or person of man." Jeremy Taylor, in his *Exhortation to the Imitation of the Life of Christ*, while admitting that we never read "that Jesus laughed, and but once that He rejoiced in spirit," goes on to argue that the "declensions of our natures cannot bear the weight of a perpetual grave deportment, without the intervals of refreshment and free alacrity." In the same

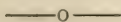
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\* "He would weep often, but never laugh."—Ludolphus, *Vita Christi*.

spirit the late Archdeacon Hare argued, that while, avowedly, we cannot follow too closely the Great Exemplar, we are not to cleave servilely to the outward form, but rather to endeavour that the principles of our actions may be the same which He manifested in His; for as He did many things which we cannot do,—as He had a power and a wisdom which lie altogether beyond our reach,—so are there many things which beseem us in our human, earthly relations, but which it did not enter into His purpose to sanction by His express example. “Else on the selfsame grounds it might be contended, that it does not befit a Christian to be a husband or a father, seeing that Jesus has set us no example of these two sacred relations.” A later commentator holds it to be as certain that the Man of Sorrows smiled at the gambols of a child, and shared the joy of the good, as that He sat at a wedding feast, and turned water into wine, and entered the house of joy as well as that of mourning. Man, on the same authority, is a laughing animal; superior to the “lower” animals in this, if in nothing else; and to be ashamed of laughter, to hold back genuine mirth, is pronounced unworthy of the good, brave man who loves sunshine, and the lark’s song, and the open breezy day, and dares to enjoy the happy thoughts which his Creator has, by assumption, put into his heart, to enliven and to better it.

Rigid repressers and reprovers of laughter, as in itself a thing to be rigorously and vigorously, at all seasons and for all reasons, reproved and repressed, would seem to have based their system on a literal and exclusive reading of the once-uttered woe, “Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.” Equally they would seem to have never read, or else to have clean forgotten, the benediction that by only a few verses pre-

cedes that woe: "Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh." He that pronounced the blessing, recognised therefore a time to laugh; and recognised it as the good time coming, all in good time to come.



## XXXVIII.

*A TIME TO HATE.*

ECCLESIASTES iii. 8.

SO comprehensive is the range of the Preacher's doctrine, that to everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the sun, that he explicitly includes hate in the category—hateful a thing though unqualified hate may be. There is "a time to hate." Take hate in a malignant sense, or as the evil outcome of an unchastened nature, of unrestrained impulse, of unbridled passion; and then the time for it can scarcely be too short. We should in that case class it with the permissible anger, upon which it is not permissible to let the sun go down. The hate that is hateful absolutely, has no part or lot in the matter of times and seasons to be sanctioned by any Preacher. He that hateth his brother, is said by the Apostle of love to be in darkness, walking in it, and not knowing whither he goeth, so entirely hath darkness blinded his eyes. Nay, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." And, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar." Hateful, and hating one another, is another Apostle's characterization of deeply fallen natures. But the Apostle of love himself expressly urges that we love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, and of the world, worldly; and by loving not, he im-

plies what is a Scripture synonym for hate ; hate and love being often used as different degrees of one feeling—as when to hate father and mother for Christ's sake, means to love them less in comparison. But the legitimate action of well-directed hate is amply recognised and largely asserted in holy writ. There is a time to hate, because there are things to hate ; and to be a good hater in that sense is but to be, so far, a good man. The Church of Ephesus had this meed of praise from Him that spake as Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, "that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate." The saints ad dressed by Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, are prompted to hate even the garment spotted by the flesh. "The Lord, the God of Israel, saith [by Malachi], that He hateth putting away" (a wife without due cause). His only Son was anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows, because He had loved righteousness and hated iniquity. "Thou hatest all workers of iniquity," the Psalmist says in his prayer and meditation. "The wicked and him that loveth violence, His soul hateth." These six things doth the Lord hate, as we read in the Book of Proverbs ; "yea, seven are an abomination unto Him : a proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren." The fear of the Lord is to hate evil ; and the testimony of Wisdom impersonated is, that "pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate." It is for the man after God's own heart to say, "I have hated the congregation of evil-doers." Evil-doing in all its phases is worthy of hate ; it is good to be a good hater of it, and the better the hate the better the man.



The Good Hater, simply as such, is rather a favourite with discerning spirits :

“Rough Johnson, the great moralist, professed,  
Right honestly, ‘he liked an honest hater’”—

and this, Byron calls

“The only truth that yet has been confessed,  
Within the latest thousand years or later.”

Byron's journal and letters contain evidence of his sympathy with Johnson's avowed predilection. For instance, of Junius he says in his diary, “I like him;—he was a good hater.”

Lord Lytton has indited a lament over the good old days when plain speaking and hard blows were in fashion—when a man had his heart at the tip of his tongue, and four feet of sharp iron dangling at his side, and when Hate played an honest open part in the theatre of the world. But now where is Hate? he asks—who ever sees its face? Is it that smiling, good-tempered creature, that presses you by the hand so cordially? or that dignified figure of state that calls you its “Right Honourable Friend”? And he suggests that as, in the Gothic age, grim Humour painted the “Dance of Death,” so, in our polished century, some sardonic wit should give us the “Masquerade of Hate.” How deep in the foundations of our nature the instinct lies, and how strongly as well as deeply rooted, let Mr. Browning's Paracelsus attest :

“Oh, sages have discovered we are born  
For various ends—to love, to know: has ever  
One stumbled, in his search, on any signs  
Of a nature in him formed to hate? To hate?  
If that be our true object which evokes  
Our powers in fullest strength, be sure 'tis hate!”

Here and there, it is true, one lights on a nature such as Sir James Mackintosh's, of whom Sydney Smith

made it a special characteristic that he was devoid of hate—as well as of envy, malice, and all uncharitableness; asserting that he *could* not hate—did not know how to set about it; that the gall-bladder was omitted in his composition; and that if he could have been persuaded into any scheme of revenging himself upon an enemy, he assuredly would (unless narrowly watched) have ended, like the involuntary seer of old, in blessing him altogether.

Notions vary of what a good hater is, or should be. The Earl of Chesterfield complains that few (especially young) people know how to hate, any more than how to love; their love, he says, is an unbounded weakness, fatal to the object of it; while their hate is a hot, rash, and imprudent violence, always fatal to themselves. Slight sympathy could his serene lordship ever have felt with what Molière's *Alceste* justifies as

“ — ces haines vigoureuses  
Que doit donner le vice aux âmes vertueuses.”

To hate an oppressor is maintained by Mr. Buckle to be an instinct of our nature, against which he who struggles does so to his own detriment. For although we may abhor a speculative principle, and yet respect him who advocates it, this distinction is confined to the intellectual world, and does not extend to the practical. Such a separation cannot, for instance, “extend to deeds of cruelty. In such cases, our passions instruct our understanding. The same cause which excites our sympathy for the oppressed, stirs up our hatred of the oppressor.” And this instinct is declared to belong to the higher region of the mind, and not to be impeached by argument, not capable even of being touched by it. Some such feeling may be assumed in palliation of the vindictive outburst of Edward Bruce, in Scott's poem,

when exulting over the death of his namesake, king of England :

“Eternal as his own, my hate  
Surmounts the bounds of mortal fate,  
And dies not with the dead !  
Such hate was his on Solway’s strand,  
When vengeance clenched his palsied hand,  
That pointed yet to Scotland’s land,  
As his last accents prayed  
Disgrace and curse upon his heir,  
If he one Scottish head should spare,  
Till stretched upon the bloody lair  
Each rebel corpse was laid.  
Such hate was his, when his last breath  
Renounced the peaceful house of death,  
And bade his bones to Scotland’s coast  
Be borne by his remorseless host,  
As if his dead and stony eye  
Could still enjoy her misery.  
Such hate was his—dark, deadly, long ;  
Mine,—as enduring, deep, and strong !”

The very definition of a patriot, according to Hazlitt, is “a good hater ;” a good-natured man being, on his showing, no more fit to be trusted in public affairs than a coward or a woman is to lead an army. Spleen he declares to be the soul of patriotism and of public good. And of spleen, Hazlitt himself had enough and to spare.—The intensity of mutual hate has been called the leading characteristic of the whole course of Italian history, furnishing the master-key to its intricacies ; private hatred between man and man ; class hatred between family and family ; party hatred between Blacks and Whites, or Longs and Shorts, or any other distinctive factions ; political hatred between patricians and plebeians ; social hatred between citizens and “rustics ;” while municipal hatred between one city and another is declared to have ever been in Italy the master passion, vigorous in its action and notable in

its results in proportion to the vigour of social life animating the body of the nation. Heine claims for the Germans, however, a proud pre-eminence in the power of intensely hating: "Les Allemands sont plus rancuniers que les peuples d'origine romane." They are idealists, he asserts, even in their hate; and what they hate in an enemy is *la pensée*. He told the French they were quick and superficial in hatred, as in love; while *nous autres Allemands* cherish a radical detestation, and hold on to it to the very last. "Nous nous haïssons jusqu'au dernier soupir." Luther was a representative man of his race, in the intellectual hatred he so implacably avowed against Erasmus. "I pray you all to vow enmity to Erasmus," was a Trinity Sunday exhortation of his to all and sundry his friends; and to Doctors Jonas and Pomeranus in particular he bequeathed this injunction, expressed with manifestly heartfelt emphasis: "I recommend it to you as my last will, to be terrible and unflinching towards that serpent.— If I myself am restored to health, by God's help I will write against him and kill him." For a German of the Germans, constitutionally so "sweet blooded" (in Jeffrey's pet phrase) as Martin Luther, the power of hating he displayed was what across the Atlantic might be termed a caution.

Natures may be so sweet-blooded, or so cold-blooded, as to be wanting in the elementary materials that go to make up a good hater. Macaulay says of Bacon, that he was by no means a good hater; that the temperature of his revenge, like that of his gratitude, was scarcely even more than lukewarm. When of Macaulay himself, by the way, on the occasion of his death, some press critic asserted that he "had no heart," how warmly Mr. Thackeray denied that negation, and declared the heart of the brilliant historian to be sensibly beating through



every page he penned—so that he seemed to be always in a storm of revolt and indignation against wrong, craft, tyranny. “How he hates scoundrels, ever so victorious and successful! . . . The critic who says Macaulay had no heart, might say that Johnson had none; and two men more generous, and more loving, and more hating, and more partial, and more noble, do not live in our history.” Rousseau more than once declares of himself that he knew not how to hate; that he could despise his enemies heartily and freely, but as to hating them—that he knew not how to set about it. One would scarcely have inferred any such absolute impotency, from a study of the *opera omnia* of Jean-Jacques—some of which rather indicate an ample secretion of gall, such as a very good hater indeed might find quite enough for all practical purposes. The Abbé de Choisy is another of those *spirituel* Frenchmen who have claimed to be innocent of the faculty of hate. He is *sans rancune*, he protests, and is without an enemy in the world, and without the power of making one. His nature “cherchait vainement en elle la force de haïr.” Sainte-Beuve defines him accordingly as in all respects the opposite of Alceste and of M. de Montausier. So is he of such a man as Guy Patin, with his almost Rabelaisian *rages de parole* against those devoted objects of his detestation,—monks, jesuits, and apothecaries. War to the knife against these,—war to the death, was Guy Patin’s principle and his practice.

Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester,—the sweet Robin of Queen Bess,—has this said of him by an author who is prompt to recognize his good qualities, that no man ever made so many enemies: “He was an excellent hater, and few men have been more cordially hated in return.” Mr. Motley describes the imperious, insolent, hot-tempered earl, during his career in the Netherlands,

as mortally offending Hohenlo, Buys, Barneveld, and others, while the English representative, Wilkes, was a special object of his aversion; and as for Sir John Norris, him the Earl hated with a most passionate hatred. Of course when Hohenlo and Sir John Norris became very good friends, the enmity between them and Leicester grew more deadly every day. The Earl was "frantic with rage" against them, denouncing Norris as "a fool, liar, and coward" on all occasions, besides overwhelming every one who took his part with a torrent of abuse; and it is well known, the historian of the United Provinces remarks, that the Earl was a master of Billingsgate.

It is in reference to "accomplished St. John" that the late Lord Lytton once said, that we cannot blame politicians for their hatred, until, without hating anybody, we have for a long time been politicians ourselves: "Strong minds have strong passions, and men of strong passions must hate as well as love." Bolingbroke's antipathy to Harley is said by one of his biographers to have been so strong, that even success would have been hateful to him, if Lord Oxford were to share in it. "He abhorred him to that degree, that he could not bear to be joined with him in any case; and even some time after, when the lives of both were aimed at, he could not think of concerting measures with him for their mutual safety, preferring even death itself to the appearance of a temporary friendship." And these were the two men between whom Swift had to play Mr. Harmony,—Dr. Jonathan being himself one of the very best of good haters. So was Pope—though he could occasionally simulate, perhaps, a much deeper aversion than he actually felt. De Quincey at least charges him with adopting malice at second-hand, in the case of the Duchess of Marlborough (his Atossa); remarking that

more shocking than the malice is the self-imposture of the malice ; and accusing Pope of being really unmoved, or angry only by favour of dyspepsy, while in the very act of puffing out his cheeks, like Æolus, with ebullient fury, and conceiting himself to be in a passion perfectly diabolic. Of Duchess Sarah, on the other hand, the same critic affirms, not without explicit admiration, that sulphureous vapours of wrath rose up in columns from the crater of her tempestuous nature against him that deeply offended her, while she neglected petty wrongs. With quite other colours is her portrait painted by Macaulay, who, contrasting her with her husband, "one of the most covetous, but one of the least acrimonious of mankind," says that malignity was in her a stronger passion than avarice ; that she hated easily, hated heartily, and hated implacably ; among the objects of her hatred being all who were related to her royal mistress on either the paternal or the maternal side. Elsewhere the historian speaks of the Duchess of Marlborough as carrying to her grave the reputation of being decidedly the best hater of her time—though he is careful to add, that her love had been infinitely more destructive than her hatred. She was eminently capable of one of those concentrated hatreds of which, according to M. About, only women *are* capable. In Madame, Mère du Régent d'Orléans, has been recognized a degree of antipathy to Madame de Maintenon, almost inconceivable in its excess "de haine, d'animosité, et si violent que cela devient comique." Mr. Trollope incidentally observes, that for a true spirit of persecution, one should always go to a woman ; and that the milder, the sweeter, the more womanly the woman, the stronger will be that spirit within her. "Strong love for the thing loved necessitates strong hatred for the thing hated ; and thence comes the spirit of persecution." M. Ampère makes

Sylla a laggard in his knowledge of the sex when he puts the note of interrogation to one of them: "Tu sais donc, comme moi, bien haïr?" "Je suis femme," is the only and all-sufficient reply to such a query as that.

Commend us to Horace Walpole as one of the fullest-grown specimens extant of a good hater. And there was such a wonderful breadth in his animosity, as the critics have observed; for he displays equal, or nearly equal bitterness towards men of all parties. Invited by Sir Horace Mann to share in his friend's detestation of Cardinal Acquaviva, "I can't afford to hate people so much at such a distance," writes Walpole: "my aversions find employment within their own atmosphere." Nor were they ever idle within that range—which, however, for all his professions to the contrary, they often enough overpassed. Some of his own family were the objects of his exceeding hate; but if his lack of charity began at home, it did not end there. His "monster" of an uncle, Horace, "lowest of buffoons,"—his cousin, "Pigwiggin," a shade more odious still,—Lord Holland, the Yorkes, the King; while ever and anon there comes in the Letters such a passage as this: "I used to say to myself, 'Lord, this person is so bad, that person is so bad, I hate them.' I have now found out that they are all pretty much alike, and I hate nobody."

Dr. Currie claims for Burns a capacity hardly inferior to Johnson's own, for hearty hating, "as long as the disposition to ill-will continued; but the fervour of his passions was fortunately tempered by their versatility." The designation of a good hater would probably be denied by the orthodox to one of shifty temperament, who could forego an enmity with change of wind, or fortune, or place—and could not hate on, and on, and still on, without variableness and beyond conciliation. Of Cobbett, in 1817, Miss Mitford writes: "He was



always what Dr. Johnson would have called a very pretty hater ; but since his release from Newgate he has been hatred itself—a very abstract and personification of misanthropy, which, for more grace, he has christened Patriotism.” Goethe, who professed to hate everything Oriental (“*Eigentlich aber hasse ich alles Orientalische*”), said he was glad there was something he hated ; for otherwise one is in danger of falling into the dull habit of literally finding all things good in their place,—and that, said he, is destructive of all true feeling. He makes his Tasso protest that he must and will go on hating Antonio, whether mistaken about the man or not :

“And if I err, I err with right good will.  
I count him for my most inveterate foe,  
And should be inconsolable, were I  
Compelled to think of him more leniently.  
Man’s nature, in its narrow scope, demands  
The twofold sentiment of love and hate.”

Certain characters are known to exist, and those not by any means the worst, to whom the indulgence of a good hot hatred is as refreshing and delightful as the luxury of love to others. An essayist on Hatred shows how this is intelligible ; love and hatred being on the same line of passionate emotion, the only difference with them is, that the habitual emotion which constitutes their life lies nearer to the pole of hatred ; so that, but for the fear of a paradox, one might almost say that hatred is, in fact, the form love takes in them. “It is their form of passionate care and attention. Instead of the slow and agonizing simmer of love, theirs is the slow, and to them delicious, simmer of hatred.” Unquestionably there are men to whom a good hatred is naturally congenial,—it is to them a perpetual source of life, and a fillip to the full sense of overflowing exist-

ence. "Love, even the most passionate love, is probably not to be compared for intensity of sensation with a full-blown hatred." As poison is the life of certain plants, so is hatred said to be the life of certain natures. Theirs is a tenderly-cherished aversion; and it would, to critical observers of them, almost seem as if this form of hatred were in the nature of the intensest occupation vouchsafed to mankind.

Describing the life of every devout Spaniard of old as a perpetual crusade, the historian of Latin Christianity remarks that hatred of the Jew, of the Mohammedan, was the herrban under which he served—it was the oath of his chivalry; and that hatred, in all its intensity, was soon and easily extended to the heretic. To be a good hater of all these,—how else could the Spaniard be a good man?

In no one, says Mr. Bagehot, has the intense faculty of intellectual hatred—the hatred which the absolute dogmatist has for those in whom he incarnates and personifies the opposing dogma—been fiercer or stronger than in Burke. Of Sir Philip Francis, Macaulay observes that his hatred was of intense bitterness and long duration. And, mistaking his malevolence for virtue, he "nursed it, as preachers tell us we ought to nurse our good dispositions, and paraded it on all occasions, with Pharisaical ostentation."

Lord Brougham would make out George III. to have been a good hater, especially of his eldest son, "whom he hated with a hatred scarcely consistent with a sound mind." And on the same authority Lord Thurlow belongs to the same category—the first and foremost object of *his* hate being "Mr. Pitt, whom he hated with a hatred as hearty as even Lord Thurlow could feel," though in this case commingling his dislike with a scorn which his Whig suc-

cessor on the woolsack pronounces wholly unbecoming and misapplied.

Sometimes a good hater crops up from the unlikeliest soil. That seemingly very mild old gentleman, Voss, who wrote the sentimental idyl called "Luise," fairly startled his old acquaintance Frederick Perthes by the abrupt energy with which, at the mention of Fouqué's name, he turned from serene discourse and "patriarchal *Luisisms* about God's beautiful nature, and flowers, and plants, and old times, and simple-hearted men," to a strain of invective against Fouqué and all his works that "really terrified" the listener. Furiously too the old man went on to inveigh against Claudius, Stolberg, and others; and after dinner, walking with his visitor in the garden, the patriarch ran over a string of names, more or less distinguished, adding to each some epithet, such as "scoundrel, mischief-making traitor, sneaking hound," etc., etc., till Perthes could stand it no longer, but left the premises, and wrote home that there reigned in that apparent home of tranquil joy and wisdom, "a spirit of hatred that has surprised and deeply pained me." The venerable Voss reminds us in his style of the reverend Joseph Wolff, D.D., who displayed his powers as a good hater by such accumulated phrases in his book of Travels and Adventures, as "filthy Calvinist," "some long-nosed snuff-taking lady of the so-called Evangelical party," "a long-face-pulling lady with a whining voice," "nasty Atheist and infidel," and the like; while, religion apart—and certainly the *odium theologicum* can match any other in its intensity—he never, it has been remarked, mentions a certain Frenchman, with whom he travelled in Mesopotamia, but as "Digeon the scoundrel." What a good hater, again, was put to silence when the *Univers* was "warned" by the French Government, and M. Veuillot

checked in his rhapsodies of invective. Englishmen declared his hatred of England to be quite respectable from its intensity. "M. Veuillot was a good hater, and good haters are by no means the worst of their species." Dr. Arnold, in his cordial way, hating as well as loving with a will, is taxed by De Quincey with hating the High Church with a hatred more than theological; while, as regards the Low Church, though not hating them, he is represented as despising them so profoundly as to make any alliance between him and them impossible.

Shrewd observers tell us that the incapacity for hatred is generally the result of a defect rather than a positive virtue. The people who hate nobody are likened, most of them, to Pope's women—

"Matter too soft a lasting mark to bear,  
And best distinguished by black, brown, or fair."

They are defined to be of the passionless and insipid order, who do not hate simply because they have not the strength of character to entertain any very strong or decided passion. And, therefore, taking men as they are and not as they ought to be, we are said to be rather pleased than otherwise by discovering that a man has good, hearty, unreasonable hatred for some of his neighbours, because it proves at least that he has strong emotions, and is something better than one of the ciphers of society. It may be clear that he does not belong to the highest, but it is also clear that he does not belong to the lowest and most numerous class of human beings, and therefore the net result of the discovery is decidedly in his favour. "It proves that he is above the average of humanity." The Prince de Conti—Saint Simon's de Conti; and what a good hater Saint Simon was!—is thus appraised, on his feeble side, by the Marquis de Lassay: "*Il ne sait ni bien aimer,*



ni bien haïr." A later French writer objects to the common remark, a fallacy he considers it to be, that those who can hate well can therefore love well—as if these two sentiments had the same origin. Whereas, by his scheme of psychology, affection proceeds from the heart, and hatred from irritated *amour-propre* or wounded self-interest.

In one of Hawthorne's phantasy-pieces, as the Germans would call them, which is devoted to the chippings of a chisel from gravestones and monumental tablets, we come across an elderly man, of harsh aspect, who orders a stone for the grave of his bitter enemy, his adversary in the warfare of half a lifetime, to their mutual misery and ruin. The secret of this procedure is explained to have been, that hatred had become the sustenance and enjoyment of the poor wretch's soul; it had supplied the place of all kindly affections; it had been really a bond of sympathy between himself and the man who shared the passion; and when its object died, the unappeasable foe was the only mourner for the dead. He expressed a purpose of being buried side by side with his enemy. "I doubt whether their dust will mingle," said the old sculptor. But our more subtle author, who had mused long upon the incident, replied, "Oh, yes; and when they rise again, these bitter foes may find themselves dear friends. Methinks what they mistook for hatred was but love under a mask."

It is a curious subject of speculation with Nathaniel Hawthorne, in another work, whether hatred and love be not the same thing at bottom; each, in its utmost development, supposing a high degree of intimacy and heart-knowledge; each rendering one individual dependent for the food of his affections and spiritual life upon another; and each leaving the passionate lover, or the

no less passionate hater, forlorn and desolate by the withdrawal of his subject. Philosophically considered, therefore, the author of "Transformation" takes the two passions to be essentially the same, only one happens to be seen in a celestial radiance, and the other in a dusky and lurid glow. Mr. Browning moots the general question from another point of view when he speaks of

"Dante, who loved well because he hated,  
Hated wickedness that hinders loving."

—o—

### XXXIX.

#### *FAST-ASLEEP TOIL AND WIDE-AWAKE CARE.*

ECCLESIASTES v. 12.

IT is written among the words of the Preacher, the son of David, king of Jerusalem, that "the sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much; but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep." "Yea, *his* heart taketh not rest in the night. This is also vanity." The cares of this life, and the deceitfulness of riches, make him full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day.

La Fontaine's fable of the Financier and the Cobbler might have been written on purpose to illustrate the proverb now our text. The financier, careful and troubled about many things financial, and cumbered with much service of mammon, finds what little rest he otherwise might get, disturbed, diminished, and reduced to its lowest terms by the lusty voice of his light-hearted neighbour the cobbler, who sings away at sunrise, after a sound night's rest, and now up in the morning early to a hard day's work. Dives thinks it remiss of Providence not to have made sound sleep a purchasable

commodity, to be quoted on 'change. However, he summons the cobbler to his presence, and questions him as to the amount of his daily gains by cobbling; is amused by his vivacity; and astounds him by a gift of a hundred crowns. The cobbler thinks himself possessor of, surely, all the money there is in the wide world; takes it home, buries it in a hole, and with it buries his gladheartedness. For now he is the victim of care; anxious misgivings beset him as to the safety of his treasure; he sings no more; he is unable to sleep; if some cat make a noise by night, the cat is making off with his hard cash. So at last the poor man hies him to the rich one, whose slumbers he had now ceased to disturb, and demands to have back his songs and his sleep, in return for the hundred crowns he is heartily glad to get rid of on such terms. So with De Foe's Colonel Jack, when, as a lad, he receives a handful of gold from an elder accomplice in theft, and finds himself hopelessly embarrassed to know what to do with the prize. "Nothing could be more perplexing to me than this money was all night." After a variety of graphic details, he continues: "Well, I carried it home with me to my lodging in the glass-house, and when I went to sleep, I knew not what to do with it, . . . so I lay with it in my hand, and my hand in my bosom, but then sleep went from my eyes. Oh, the weight of human care! I, a poor beggar-boy, could not sleep as soon as I had a little money to keep, who, before that, could have slept upon a heap of brickbats, stones, or cinders, as sound as a rich man does in his down bed, and sounder too."

Before the little door that Spenser's Elfin-knight found to be next adjoining to the gate of hell—for betwixt them both was but a little stride, that did the House of Richesse from Hell-mouth divide,—

“ Before the dore sate self-consuming Care,  
Day and night keeping wary watch and ward,  
For feare lest Force or Fraude should unaware  
Breake in, and spoile the treasure there in gard :  
Ne would he suffer Sleepe once thitherward  
Approch.”

In Churchill's *Gotham* we see the villager, born humbly and bred hard, Content his wealth, and Poverty his guard, after short commons with his “raw-boned cubs” on clean, coarse food, betake him to rest, and safe to find it :

“ Then, free from care, and free from thought, he creeps  
Into his straw, and till the morning sleeps.  
—Not so the king ; with anxious cares oppressed  
His bosom labours, and admits not rest.

\* \* \* When Night bids sleep,  
Sweet nurse of nature, o'er the senses creep ;  
When Misery herself no more complains,  
And slaves, if possible, forget their chains ;  
Though his sense weakens, though his eyes grow dim,  
The rest which comes to all, comes not to him.  
E'en at that hour, Care, tyrant Care, forbids  
The dew of sleep to fall upon his lids ;  
From night to night she watches at his bed ;  
Now, as one moped, sits brooding o'er his head ;  
Anon she starts, and, borne on raven's wings,  
Croaks forth aloud—‘Sleep was not made for kings.’ ”

A similar contrast is drawn in the same writer's *Duellist*, in the first book of which we see how, while

“ Jealousy, his quick eye half-closed,  
With watchings worn, reluctant dozed ;  
And, mean Distrust not quite forgot,  
Slumbered as if he slumbered not ;  
Stretched at his length on the bare ground,  
His hardy offspring sleeping round,  
Snored restless Labour,”—

why called restless, is open to conjecture. Don Quixote, summoning at daybreak his somnolent squire, and finding him still snoring, apostrophizes Sancho as happy in



the extreme, because, neither envying nor envied, he can take his needful rest with tranquillity of soul. "Sleep on—a hundred times I say, sleep on! No jealousies keep thee in perpetual watchings, nor do anxious thoughts of debts unpaid awake thee. . . . Ambition disquiets thee not, nor does the vain pomp of the world disturb thee: for thy chief concern is the care of thine ass. . . . The servant sleeps, and the master lies awake." It is in one of the latest chapters in the same long history that we read of Sancho never wanting a second sleep, for the first lasted him from night till morning, "indicating a sound body and mind free from care. But his master, being unable to sleep himself, awakened him, saying, 'I am amazed, Sancho, at the torpor of thy soul; it seems as if thou wert made of marble or brass, insensible of emotion or sentiment,'" etc. One of the Don's eloquent outbursts of upbraidal winds up with a bit of Latin, and Sancho rejoins, "I know not what that means; I only know that while I am asleep I have neither fear nor hope, nor trouble nor glory. Blessings light on him who first invented sleep!—it covers a man all over, body and mind, like a cloak; and it is meat to the hungry, and drink to the thirsty." The sleep of that serving-man was sweet, whether he ate little or much; though he certainly preferred eating much, and lost no fair chance of doing so.

One of the extant songs of the Elizabethan dramatist, Robert Greene, begins,—

"Sweet are the thoughts that savour of content;  
The quiet mind is richer than a crown;  
Sweet are the nights in careless slumber spent;  
The poor estate scorns fortune's angry frown:  
Such sweet content, such minds, such sleep, such bliss,  
Beggars enjoy, when princes oft do miss."

Scott dismisses his Dame Jellycot and Phœbe to sleep

on a mattress stuffed with dry leaves, "soundly as those whose daily toil gains their daily bread, and whom morning calls up only to renew the toils of yesterday." Soundly as Bloomfield's Farmer's Boy :

"Delicious sleep ! From sleep who could forbear,  
With no more guilt than Giles, and no more care ?  
Peace o'er his slumbers waves her guardian wing,  
Nor Conscience once disturbs him with a sting.  
He wakes refreshed from every trivial pain,  
And takes his pole, and brushes round again."

Mr. Disraeli asserts that there is no greater fallacy in the world than the common creed, that sweet sleep is labour's guerdon : mere regular, corporeal labour may certainly, he admits, procure us a good, sound, refreshing slumber, though disturbed often by the consciousness of the monotonous duties of the morrow ; but how sleep the other great labourers of this laborious world ? Where, he asks, is the sweet sleep of the politician ? "After hours of fatigue in his office, and hours of exhaustion in the House, he gains his pillow ; and a brief, feverish night, disturbed by the triumph of a cheer and the horrors of a reply." And then come the parallel queries, Where is the sweet sleep of the poet—of the artist—of the lawyer ? Where, indeed, of any human being to whom to-morrow brings its necessary duties ? "Sleep is the enemy of Care, and Care is the constant companion of regular labour, mental or bodily." The care of riches, saith Jesus the son of Sirach, driveth away sleep.

"Now soundly sleeps the weary hind,  
Though lowly lies his head ;  
An easy lair the guiltless find  
Upon the hardest bed.  
The beggar, in his wretched haunt,  
May now a monarch be,  
Forget his woe, forget his want,  
For all can sleep but me,"—

is Conrad's plaint in an unread poem. The Weissnichtwo philosopher qualifies his lament for the poor by the reflection that for him, heavy-laden and weary, the Heavens send sleep, and of the deepest: "in his smoky cribs, a clear dewy heaven of Rest envelops him, and fitful glitterings of cloud-skirted Dreams." Shakspeare's saying, that

" — Weariness

Can snore upon the flint, when restive Sloth  
Finds the down pillow hard,"

moves a genial, not a dry-as-dust, commentator to the remark, that sleeping on hard stone would have been words strong enough for a common poet; or perhaps the latter would have said "resting," or "profoundly reposing," or that the hind could have made his "bed of the bare floor;" but Shakspeare must have the very strongest words and really profoundest expressions, and he finds them in the homeliest and most primitive: he does not mince the matter, but goes to the root of both sleep and stone—"can *snore* upon the *flint*." We see the fellow hard at it—bent upon it—deeply drinking of the forgetful draught. So Mr. Carlyle pictures his night-leaguers of San Martin, lullabied by hard travail, all sinking soon enough into "steady nose-melody, into the foolishhest rough colt-dance of unimaginable Dreams"—"all steadily snoring there, in the heart of the Andes, under the eternal stars"—"all snoring steadily, begirt by granite deserts, looked upon by the constellations in that manner." As Shakspeare's Henry the Fourth taxes sleep, gentle sleep, nature's soft nurse, with forsaking him, and with willing rather to lie in smoky cribs, upon uneasy pallets, nay, with the vile on loathsome beds, than in the perfumed chambers of the great, under the canopies of costly state, and lulled by sounds of sweetest melody; so his Harry the Fifth avows that

'tis not the balm, the sceptre, and the ball, the sword,  
the mace, the crown imperial, the robe of gold and pearl,  
the title of the king,

“The throne he sits on, nor the tide of pomp  
That beats upon the high shore of this world,  
No, not all these, thrice-gorgeous ceremony,  
Not all these, laid in bed majestical,  
Can sleep so soundly as the wretched slave,  
Who, with a body filled, and vacant mind,  
Gets him to rest, crammed with distressful bread ;  
Never sees horrid night, the child of hell ;  
But, like a lackey, from the rise to set,  
Sweats in the eye of Phœbus, and all night  
Sleeps in Elysium.”

Readily would the speaker echo his father's conclusion  
of happy the lowly clown—or happy low lie down ;  
whichever be, or whatever else, the true reading—for, un-  
easy lies the head that wears a crown. So again with  
the sixth Henry, envying the shepherd's life, his homely  
curds even, his cold thin drink out of his leather bottle,

“His wonted sleep under a fresh tree's shade,  
All which secure and sweetly he enjoys,  
Is far beyond a prince's delicates,  
His viands sparkling in a golden cup,  
His body couchèd in a curious bed,  
When care, mistrust, and treason wait on him.”

*Otium* is a thing, on Horatian authority, *non gemmis,  
neque purpurâ venale, nec auro*. Happy the poor man  
from whom “*Nec leves somnos timor aut cupido Sor-  
didus aufert.*” Come hither, is Cowper's summons to  
those who press their beds of down and sleep not :  
watch the thresher at his task, as thump after thump  
resounds the constant flail ;

“See him sweating o'er his bread  
Before he eats it.—'Tis the primal curse,  
But softened into mercy ; made the pledge  
Of cheerful days, and nights without a groan.”



Why do we murmur? is the remonstrance of a cheery spirit in one of Barry Cornwall's dramatic fragments: "Are we poor? What's that? 'Tis but to breathe the air of industry; to use sweet exercise from morn till eve,—earn health, content, rude strength, and appetite;

"And, when night draws her curtains round us, sleep  
Through all the unbroken silence."

*Somnus agrestium Lenis virorum non humiles domos Fastidit.* Sleep will sometimes, says the Doctor, press heavily on the lids, even when the mind is wakeful, and feverishly, or miserably employed; but it will seldom "steep the senses" unless it be of that sound kind which denotes a healthy body and a heart at ease. "They who sleep soundly must be free from care." Referring to men of the lower classes in the south of Europe, who lie down in the sun or shade, according to the season, and fall asleep like dogs at any time, Southey remarks, that the less they are raised above animal life, the sounder the sleep is, and the more it seems to be an act of volition with them; when they close their eyes there is nothing within to keep them waking.

There is that neither day nor night seeth sleep with his eyes, saith he that applied his heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done upon the earth. "Watching care," saith the son of Sirach, "will not let a man slumber, as a sore disease breaketh sleep." Shakespeare's Brutus, having to summon Lucius again and again, utters the sighing regret, "I would it were my fault to sleep so soundly." Well may both he and Cassius therefore be mistrusted by Cæsar, who would fain have about him men that "sleep o' nights." Finding Lucius fast again, when again wanted for service, his careworn master exclaims,

"—— Fast asleep? It is no matter;  
Enjoy the honey-heavy dew of slumber:

Thou hast no figures nor no fantasies  
Which busy care draws in the brains of men ;  
Therefore thou sleep'st so sound."

The lament of Samson Agonistes is that

"Sleep hath forsook and giv'n me o'er  
To death's benumbing opium as my only cure :  
Thence faintings, swoonings of despair,  
And sense of Heaven's desertion."

Care murders sleep in the case of Homer's king of men ; and at the same time, and for the same reason, is "his brother, pressed with equal woes, alike denied the gifts of soft repose." While all the world is at rest, poetically speaking, Virgil's Phœnissa *neque unquam Solvitur in somnos, oculisve aut pectore noctem Accipit.*" It is the opening lament of Young's prolonged *Complaint*, that tired nature's sweet restorer, like the world, his ready visit pays where fortune smiles ; "the wretched he forsakes ; swift on his downy pinions flies from woe, and lights on lids unsullied with a tear." Dying King Henry the Fourth at last sleeps soundly, a little before his last sleep of all—"yet not so sound and half so deeply sweet, as he whose brow, with homely biggin bound, snores out the watch of night." Sorrow, as Brakenbury says of Clarence, breaks seasons, and reposing hours make the night morning, and the noontide night.

In Spenser we take note of Sir Scudamour as he lies long while expecting when gentle sleep his heavy eyes would close,

"Oft changing sides, and oft new place electing,  
Where better seem'd he mote himselfe repose ;  
And oft in wrath he thence again uprore ;  
And oft in wrath he layd him downe againe.  
But, wheresoere he did himselfe dispose,  
He by no means could wished ease obtaine :  
So every place seem'd painefull, and ech changing vaine."

A pendant, or parallel, may be found in Chaucer's Romaunt of the Rose :

“To bedde as fast thou wolt thee dight,  
Where thou shalt have but smal delite ;  
For whanne thou’wenest for to slepe,  
So full of peyne shalt thou crepe,  
Sterte in thi bedde about full wide,  
And turne full ofte on every side ;  
Now downward groffe, and now upright,  
And walowe in woo the longè nyght.”

Rousseau says that misfortune and distress respect sleep, and leave the mind that inexpressible solace ; that it is only remorse which denies and destroys it. Perhaps he would but have taken the assumed exception to prove his rule, had he been told of Mary Stuart, after writing a casket letter to Bothwell, lying down upon her bed, “to sleep, doubtless—sleep with the soft tranquillity of an innocent child.” Remorse, Mr. Froude observes, may disturb the slumbers of the man who is dabbling with his first experiences of wrong ; and when the pleasure has been tasted and is gone, and nothing is left of the crime but the ruin which it has wrought, then too the Furies take their seats upon the midnight pillow ; but the “meridian of evil is for the most part left unvexed,” as though, when human creatures have chosen their road, they were left alone to follow it to the end. “I would fain have closed my eyes,” writes Lovelace, “but sleep flies me.” And he cites Cowley’s version of Horace, and thinks it well said, on either part :

“The halcyon sleep will never build his nest  
In any stormy breast.  
’Tis not enough that he doth find  
Clouds and darkness in the mind :  
Darkness but half his work will do,  
’Tis not enough ; he must find quiet too,”

But if remorse impairs the rest of Lovelace, his victim’s sleeplessness becomes another kind of exception from Rousseau’s rule. “Rest is less in my power than ever,” writes Clarissa, when excusing herself for so much

penwork by night : "Sleep has a long time ago quarrelled with me, and will not be friends, although I have made the first advances. What will be, must." Not always the innocent sleep, though it be true that remorse doth murder sleep. But remorse is supreme in that aspect of murder as one of the fine arts. Eugene Aram in the poem tells how all night he lay in agony, in anguish dark and deep ; his fevered eyes he dared not close, but stared aghast at Sleep. Byron's Alp in vain turns from side to side, to court repose ; the turban presses on his hot brow, and the mail weighs lead-like on his breast,

" Though oft and long beneath its weight  
 Upon his eyes had slumber sate,  
 Without or couch or canopy,  
 Except a rougher field and sky  
 Than now might yield a warrior's bed,  
 Than now along the heaven was spread.  
 He could not rest, he could not stay  
 Within his tent to wait for day,  
 But walked him forth along the sand,  
 Where thousand sleepers strewed the strand.  
 What pillowed them ? and why should he  
 More wakeful than the humblest be ?  
 Since more their peril, worse their toil,  
 And yet they fearless dream of spoil ;  
 While he alone, where thousands passed  
 A night of sleep, perchance their last,  
 In sickly vigil wandered on,  
 And envied all he gazed upon."

Scott has his companion picture, so far as the envying is concerned. It is where Oswald watches the lamp, and tells from hour to hour the castle-bell, and listens to the cry of the owlet and the whistle of the saddening breeze, and catches, by fits,

" — the tuneless rhyme  
 With which the warder cheats the time,  
 And envying thinks, how, when the sun  
 Bids the poor soldier's watch be done



Couched on his straw, and fancy-free,  
He sleeps like careless infancy."

Goethe's Count Egmont, in prison, apostrophizes sleep as "old friend!" and asks unbraidingly, does even faithful sleep too forsake him, like his other friends? Sleep, that was wont of yore to descend unsought upon his free brow; and in whose arms, amid the din of battle, on the waves of life, he rested, breathing lightly as a growing boy. "Sweet sleep! like the purest happiness, thou comest most willingly when uninvited, unsought." Shelley's Lionel bewails the change within him—especially that from sleep most vainly must his weary brain implore its long-lost flattery now. The wail is heard in *The Lost Bower* of Mrs. Browning, "I have lost the sound child-sleeping which the thunder could not break." Byron at six-and-twenty complained that sleep was no friend of his, though he courted him sometimes for half the twenty-four hours. Hood calls bed

- "That heaven upon earth to the weary head;  
But a place that to name would be ill-bred  
To the head with a wakeful trouble—  
'Tis held by such a different lease!  
To one, a place of comfort and peace,  
All stuffed with the down of stubble geese,  
To another with only the stubble!
- "To one, a perfect Halcyon nest,  
All calm, and balm, and quiet, and rest,  
And soft as the fur of the cony—  
To another, so restless for body and head,  
That the bed seems borrowed from Nettlebed,  
And the pillow from Stratford the Stony.
- "To the happy, a first-class carriage of ease,  
To the Land of Nod, or where you please,  
But alas! for the watchers and weepers,  
Who turn, and turn, and turn again,  
But turn, and turn, and turn in vain,  
With an anxious brain,  
And thoughts in a train  
That does not run upon 'sleepers.'

“Wide-awake as the mousing owl,  
 Night-hawk, or other nocturnal fowl—  
 But more profitless vigils keeping,—  
 Wide-awake in the dark they stare,  
 Filling with phantoms the vacant air,  
 As if that Crook-backed Tyrant Care  
 Had plotted to kill them sleeping.

“And oh ! when the blessed diurnal light  
 Is quenched by the providential night,  
 To render our slumber more certain,  
 Pity, pity the wretches that weep,  
 For they must be wretched who cannot sleep  
 When God Himself draws the curtain.” \*

Sage mediciners warn us that when no such special cause for sleeplessness exists as is supplied by the pre-

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\* Space is not, like the poet's wealth of conceit in illustration, inexhaustible ; and out of numerous other stanzas of his in fugue-like pursuit of the restless theme, space can here be only found, and that in a footnote, for the following :

“The careful Betty the pillow beats,  
 And airs the blankets, and smooths the sheets,  
 And gives the mattress a shaking—  
 But vainly Betty performs her part,  
 If a ruffled head and a rumpled heart  
 As well as the couch want making.

“There's Morbid, all bile, and verjuice, and nerves,  
 Where other people would make preserves  
 He turns his fruits into pickles :  
 Jealous, envious, and fretful by day,  
 At night, to his own sharp fancies a prey,  
 He lies like a hedgehog rolled up the wrong way,  
 Tormenting himself with his prickles.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Oh, bed ! bed ! bed ! delicious bed !  
 That heaven upon earth to the weary head,  
 Whether lofty or low its condition !  
 But instead of putting our plagues on shelves,  
 In our blankets how often we toss ourselves,  
 Or are tossed by such allegorical elves  
 As Pride, Hate, Greed, and Ambition !”

sence of acute pain, and when for two, three, or more nights in succession sleep refuses to visit the eyes and steep the senses in forgetfulness, to be blind to the significance of such a symptom is to be blind indeed. "It means that reason is tottering on its throne—that, come what may, medical counsel must be called in, and sleep, either artificial or natural, in some way secured." The arch-assailant of private "asylums" somewhere calls sleep "that vile foe to insanity and all our diseases, private asylums included;" and in the story with a purpose which he wrote against them, he shows how at the establishment selected for warning example, practice made perfect in undermining by artificial sleeplessness that organ which an asylum professes to soothe—the victim's sleep being driven away by "biting insects and barking dogs, two opiates provided in many of these placid retreats, with a view to the permanence, rather than the comfort, of the lodgers." "As for sleep, it is hardly known: insects, without a name to ears polite, but highly odoriferous and profoundly carnivorous, bite you all night, and dogs howl eternally outside." The late Lord Lytton remarked on the portentous degree in which a single night wholly without sleep will tell on the face of early youth: not till we, "hard veterans," said he, have gone through such struggles as life permits not to the slight responsibilities of raw recruits,—not till sleepless nights have grown to us familiar,—“will the beat of the east wind leave no sign on the rind.” In a much less mature work of his, when an audible yawn from the slim secretary rouses Lord Vargrave from his reverie, "I envy you, my young friend," says the latter: "It is a pleasure we lose as we grow older—that of being sleepy." Friar Lawrence chides Romeo for invading his cell so early in the dawn—

“ Young son, it argues a distemper’d head  
So soon to bid good morrow to thy bed :  
Care keeps his watch in every old man’s eye,  
And where care lodges, sleep will never lie ;  
But where unbruised youth with unstuff’d brain  
Doth couch his limbs, there golden sleep doth reign.”

Well may Youth be exhorted to cherish that happiest of earthly boons while yet at its command—for there cometh the day when “ neither the voice of the lute nor the birds ” (*non avium citharæque*, etc.) shall bring back the sweet slumbers that fell on their young eyes, as unbidden as the dews. It is a dark epoch in a man’s life, says one who knew, when sleep forsakes him ; when he tosses to and fro, and thought will not be silenced ; when the drug and draught are the courtiers of stupefaction, not sleep ; when the down pillow is as a knotted log ; when the eyelids close but with an effort, and there is a drag, and a weight, and a dizziness in the eyes at morn. After Mr. Thackeray has told us of young Penderennis in trouble, that, not having been in the habit of passing wakeful nights, he at once fell off into a sound sleep, he goes on to observe, that even in later days and with a great deal of care and other thoughtful matter to keep him awake, a man from long practice or fatigue or resolution *begins* by going to sleep as usual and gets a nap in advance of Anxiety. “ But she soon comes up with him and jogs his shoulder, and says, ‘ Come, my man, no more of this laziness, you must wake up and have a talk with me.’ Then they fall together in the midnight.” Balzac says that out of ten nights pledged to hard work by young people, they give up seven to sleep : *Il faut avoir plus de vingt ans pour veiller*. Horace Walpole in 1777 tells a correspondent that within these two months, sleep, which had been his constant support and food, had begun to grow coy. “ Can I wonder ? At first I had a mind to find a cause ; but I



recollected that twenty years ago I should have said to myself, if a person of sixty complained, 'The poor soul does not consider it is three-score !' " Some five-and-twenty years before, he had given Sir Horace Mann this account of his father, Sir Robert—that he, who used to fall asleep as soon as his head touched the pillow, "for I have frequently known him snore ere they had drawn his curtains, now never sleeps above an hour without waking." Things looked bad with Burke when he made up to the chair of the House of Commons one night, and said, "I am not well, Speaker,—I eat and drink too much, and I sleep very little." To a friend he complained later, "I sleep ill at night; and am drowsy and sleep much in the day." It looked bad for Pitt when he had to confess to a confidant, in April, 1800, that he had "lost the talent of sound sleep," which was now always broken, and depending more or less on the current transactions of the day. This was the same man, and yet quite another, of whom the story is told, three years previously, to show how calm he was when all around him were in agitation, that the First Lord of the Admiralty one night repaired to him with news from the fleet of especial urgency—and that being roused from his slumbers in Downing Street, he heard the case, and gave his instructions, and Lord Spencer took leave and withdrew; but, just at the end of the street, remembering a point he had omitted to state, the First Lord hurried back to Pitt's house, and desired to be shown up a second time to Pitt's chamber; and there, after so brief an interval, he found Pitt as before, buried in profound repose. Even Mr. Pepys, in his day, "good, easy man, full surely," found his rest spoilt by tidings of the fleet; witness his Diary of Sept. 9, 1665: "Full of these melancholy thoughts, to bed; where, though I lay the softest I ever did in my life,

with a down bed, after the Danish manner, upon me, yet I slept very ill, chiefly through the thoughts of my Lord Sandwich's concernment in all this ill success at sea." Haply, however, a down bed, after the Danish manner, *upon* Mr. Pepys, may have had something to do with his lamented unrest.

Readers of Washington Irving's *Life and Letters* may call to mind how distressed he was in advanced age, not more by want of rest than by a dread of losing it altogether. He would tell affectionate inquirers after his last night's rest, "I am apt to be rather fatigued, my dear, by my night's rest." Entirely sleepless some of his nights were, and then he would repeat pathetically Othello's plaint on the impotent aid of poppy and mandragora and all the drowsy syrups of the world. One passage in his nephew's *Diary* (Jan. 12, 1858) is significant: "His nervousness returned. Again haunted with the idea that he could not sleep. Strange disease, which seemed to want reality, and yet the most distressing." Almost a mania became the tendency to a similar feeling with the late Mr. Angell James, who, for about twenty years of his life, if he had made a promise to preach, would wake in the night, and be kept awake by the spectral promise. "I go to bed dreading I shall not sleep, and the prediction verifies itself. Then I calculate there are so many weeks to intervene, and that I shall not sleep comfortably till it is over, and how can I endure broken rest so long?" By this time the matter had got such a hold of him, that neither reason nor religion could throw it off; it was not a dread of the service itself, but a dread that he should not sleep till it was over. This has fairly been accounted strange in a man who could commit a sermon two hours long to memory without misplacing a word, and hold his immense audience in breathless attention till it was over. But it is to be classed, even if in a class

by itself, among the idiosyncrasies of nervous affections. Dread of loss of sleep may easily gain upon a sensitive temperament, aware that "that way madness lies." For insanity, or else death, is the natural close of the unnatural condition, when sleeplessness is entire and prolonged. Paulus Æmilius, according to Plutarch, was done to death by his keepers absolutely debarring him from any snatch and every chance of sleep.

"La Parque, d'une main fatale,  
Arrachant de mes yeux les paisibles pavots,  
Pour moi ne fila point une heure de repos,"—

so Gresset writes, retrospectively reviewing his time of pain and languishing. Night is the sabbath of mankind, as Butler's belaboured knight is unkindly told, "to rest the body and the mind, which thou art now denied to keep, and cure thy laboured corpse with sleep." Many were the nights that to Pascal were made sleepless by pain. Scarron's epitaph is pathetic in its appeal :

"Passants, ne faites pas de bruit,  
De crainte que je ne m'éveille ;  
Car voilà la première nuit  
Que le pauvre Scarron sommeille."

Montesquieu, on the other hand, exulted in his settled capacity of passing the night *sans s'éveiller* ; and he told Mde. du Châtelet, that instead of denying herself sleep for the sake of learning philosophy, she ought to study philosophy for the sake of learning to sleep. Not his, but Vauvenargues', is the *Maxime* about reflections giving us the slip when we summon them, and besieging us when we would drive they away, for then they "tiennent malgré nous nos yeux ouverts pendant la nuit." Montesquieu has a *Maxime* quite to the opposite effect, about himself, "quand je vais au lit,"—how his happy temperament then and there "m'empêche de faire des reflexions." Next to nothing he knew of, and as little

he cared for, the sleep-spirits invoked by a sleep-forsaken bard, in the verses beginning, "Toil hath rest at set of sun, but his brother Care hath none;" verses by one whose complaint elsewhere it is that

"—— not to me  
Comes genial rest, though oft entreated dear ;  
But anxious thoughts, that nightly watchers be  
Beside my lonely couch, the servants drear  
Of restless Grief and heart-oppressing Fear,  
True to their penal ministry, repel  
Soft-footed Sleep, with looks and tones severe,  
And words, whose import deep I may not tell."

Bitter is the cry of De Maistre's le Lépreux, "Ah ! monsieur, les insomnies, les insomnies ! Vous ne pouvez vous figurer combien est longue et triste une nuit," etc. Readers of Charlotte Brontë's *Life* may recall those nights of "sick, dreary, wakeful misery" when she, who had never been a good sleeper, was no longer able to get any sleep at all. Milverton tells us of the "sleep-shop" and its customers in *Realmah*, that women bought much cheaper kinds of the sleep on sale, and less even of those kinds, than men ; and the reason alleged is, that a much larger part of the anxiety, vexation, and remorse of the world is felt by men than by women ; and therefore the men want more sleep, and of the best quality.

Devices for wooing reluctant sleep are diversified enough, and frequently all too disappointing and inefficient. Medical biographers of the great Harvey are careful to put on record that, being troubled with sleeplessness, he used to get up and walk about his room in his shirt, till he was pretty cool, or even till he began to shiver, when he would return to bed and fall into a sleep. Sir Henry Holland congratulated himself on having committed to memory a large amount of Italian and



German poetry, so pleasurable a possession had he found it in later life—not only when travelling alone, or in places where some distraction of thought or feeling was required, but even for the “more commonplace object of courting sleep,” he adds, when sleep is reluctant to come, “these poetical recollections have served me better than any of the ordinary devices for that purpose.” He speaks of having a large provision of Dante always at hand for such use, but finds it easier and more luxurious to steal into slumber through a sonnet of Petrarch, or the stanzas of Ariosto and Tasso. “The sonnet is perhaps the most effective soporific, in whatever language it be written.” Mr. G. W. Kendall, in his narrative of the Texan Santa Fé expedition, pronounces sleep to be “a very simple process upon a campaign”—a soft place selected on the ground, and a blanket to roll oneself in, making up the co-efficients ; but he adds, that should any of his readers ever undertake a tour of the kind, and find any difficulty in getting to sleep, he can recommend a plan which “has never been known to fail in a single instance : just count the stars.” Mr. Herman Melville, at sea, resorts to certain mathematical reveries to induce repose, having found the multiplication-table of no avail ; next, summoning up “a greyish image of chaos in a sort of sliding fluidity,” he falls into a nap on the strength of it. Horace’s proposed specific (referring to Trebatius, who is noted in Cicero’s correspondence as a good swimmer) is to swim thrice across the Tiber : “*Ter uncti Transnanto Tiberim, somno quibus est opus alto ;*” after which a sound sleep should come as a matter of course ; but only perhaps from sheer physical fatigue, such as King Pedro, mourning for Inez, the Portuguese chronicle tells us, secured by dint of processions by torch-light, when he ordered out his trumpets on sleepless nights and danced along the streets, till the

dawn brought him back, exhausted, to his palace.\* The traditionary story of the Earl of Lauderdale suggests a simpler, less expensive, and less exhausting remedy. His lordship's medical advisers were at their wits' ends how to make him sleep, and could only agree that without sleep being induced he could not recover. His son, then reckoned a "daft" lad, and, as such, left all but quite uneducated,—and this boy grew up to be the Duke of Lauderdale, so "famous or infamous" in his country's history,—cried out from under the table, where he was squatting, to the embarrassed leeches, "Sen' for the preaching man frae Livingstone, for he aye sleeps in the kirk." One of the doctors favoured the prescription; the experiment of "getting a minister till him" succeeded; the earl slumbered and slept, and recovered his health. It had not then been discovered how much the position of the bedstead has to do with causing sleepless nights, for no "Scottish Curative Mesmeric Association" was as yet in existence, to broach the theory that folks should lie with their heads to the north, and not on any account to the west; in harmony with the doctrine of Dr. Julius von dem Fischweiler, of Magdeburg, who ascribed his own great age, professedly 109 years, entirely to his always pointing his heels to the south when in bed. It is in reference to him that a Saturday Reviewer deems the recent application of the doctrine of polarity to the phenomena of sleep, "fanciful as it may seem to some," to be one of those novelties which may well invite attention, enforced as it is by the potent instance of the philosopher who introduced it.

Jean Paul's eccentric Leibgeber, being seldom able to get a proper, reasonable nap at night in a solitary, deserted bedstead, on account of the struggle of thoughts

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\* Suetonius tells how Caligula would run from gallery to gallery to wear out his sleepless nights.

in his brain, used to haunt a club-house, where a truce between his thoughts would soon be effected : the delightful confusion arising from everybody's speaking at once,—the political and other conversational pic-nic of words, of which he heard “now an ultima, now a penultima,”—this was already a good precursor of sleep ; but when they went to work more systematically still, and a proposition was discussed on all sides with true logical acumen, and most closely investigated by a universal screaming hubbub, then indeed he fell asleep “as soundly as a flower which is rocked, but not awakened by the storm, and his quicksilver was quite stationary.” Southey's second chapter of *The Doctor* is professedly written to show that an author may more easily be kept awake by his own imaginations than put to sleep by them himself, whatever may be their effect upon his readers. He who in summer habitually closed his eyes as instinctively as the daisy when the sun goes down, and who in winter, by his own account, could hibernate as well as Bruin, had he but fat enough,—he whose pedigree, if properly made out, would prove him, he fancied, to be a direct descendant from one of the Seven Sleepers, and from the Sleeping Beauty in the Wood,—was now in a pronounced case of insomnolence, and vain were all his devices to coax sleep,—such as putting his arms out of bed, turning the pillow for the sake of applying a cold surface to his cheek, stretching his feet into the cold corner, listening to the river and to the ticking of his watch, thinking of all sleepy sounds and of all soporific things—the flow of water, the humming of bees, the motion of a boat, the waving of a field of corn, the nodding of a mandarin's head on the chimney-piece, a horse in a mill, Mr. Humdrum's conversation, Mr. Proser's poems, Mr. Laxative's speeches, Mr. Lengthy's sermons. He tried the device of his own

childhood, and fancied that the bed revolved with him round and round. At last Morpheus, as he has it, reminded him of Dr. Torpedo's divinity lectures, where the voice, the manner, the matter, even the very atmosphere, and the streamy candle-light, were all alike somnific;—where he who by strong effort lifted up his head, and forced open the reluctant eyes, never failed to see all around him fast asleep. Lettuces, cowslip wine, poppy syrup, mandragora, hop pillows, spider's-web pills, and the whole tribe of narcotics, up to bang and the black drop, would, he is positive, have failed; "but this was irresistible; and thus twenty years after date I found benefit from having attended the course." He was too far away to try Erskine's infallible specific, resort to the watch-box of one of those old Charlies whose determined propensity to doze was a standing joke in their day. A friend of Erskine's who was suffering from a continuous wakefulness, was experimented upon in vain with various methods of enticing sleep; but being advisedly dressed in a watchman's coat, and placed in a sentry-box, lantern in hand, he was asleep in ten minutes. The hero in *Le Nœud Gordien* of Charles de Bernard found an ever-availing resource in repeating the first book of Voltaire's *Henriade*, which was his approved substitute for opium in case of sleeplessness; despite the excitement of his mind and the irritation of his nerves, he would fall asleep before he got to the sixtieth line. Given an occasion of agitation and unrest, and, "O *Henriade*! c'est le cas de me verser tes pavots," would be his cry at bedtime, and within ten minutes of that exercise he would be fast. And yet there comes later a crisis in his career when all specifics fail. "Vainement j'appelai à mon secours mes narcotics accoutumés," including for instance the multiplying of two figures by two others (for him a prodigious



*tour de force* in arithmetic), and going over the chronology of the kings of France since Pharamond; and lastly, as a last resource, and a hitherto infallible opiate, the reciting an ode of his own composition, in the style of the *Harmonies* of Lamartine. "J'eus un moment d'espoir promptément déçu; je baillai, mais je ne dormis pas." Charles Lamb had a fellow-clerk extremely given to prosing; and "when I can't sleep o' nights," he tells a correspondent, "I imagine a dialogue with Mr. H. upon any given subject, and go prosing on in fancy with him, till I either laugh or fall asleep. I have literally found it answer." Ellesmere, finding himself sleepless the night before a great trial in which he, now Sir John, was to lead, got a volume of Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, which "great book," says he, happily contains certain long parenthetical discussions which are not very exciting: "I fell upon one of these, and in half an hour I was in a sweet and composed frame of mind, and I had five hours' good sleep that night." Southey's enumeration of vainly courted aids and appliances, soporific or sleep-compelling, has its poetic parallel in one of Wordsworth's three sonnets to sleep; but the Rydal Bard is more serious:

"A flock of sheep that leisurely pass by,  
 One after one; the sound of rain, and bees  
 Murmuring; the fall of rivers, winds and seas,  
 Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and pure sky;  
 I have thought of all by turns, and yet do lie  
 Sleepless! and soon the small birds' melodies  
 Must hear, first uttered from my orchard trees;  
 And the first cuckoo's melancholy cry.  
 Even thus last night, and two nights more, I lay,  
 And could not win thee, Sleep, by any stealth;  
 So do not let me wear to-night away:  
 Without thee what is all the morning's wealth?  
 Come, blessed barrier between day and day,  
 Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health!"

XL.

*A DEADLY FIGHT THAT MUST BE FOUGHT  
OUT.*

ECCLESIASTES viii. 8.

THERE is no man, it stands written, "that hath power over the spirit, to retain the spirit ; neither hath he power in the day of death : and there is no discharge in that war." The war must be waged to the bitter end. The fight must be fought out. And each man must fight it out himself. There can be no substitute, as there can be no discharge, in that war.

No man, saith the Psalmist, may deliver his brother, nor make agreement unto God for him ; "so that he must let that alone for ever."

There's one single combat we must all engage in, though we know for a surety, as a living writer puts it, that we shall be beaten ; we cannot shirk it, and give Death the game ; he will wrestle it out with us. *Je connais*, says the old French poet, Villon,

"— que pauvres et riches,  
Sages et fous, prêtres et lais,  
Noble et vilain, larges et chiches,  
Petits et grands, et beaux et laids,  
Mort saisit sans exception."

Chaucer's is the reminder that—

"Death menaceth every age, and smyt  
In ech estat, for ther escapith noon.  
And as certeyn, as we know everychon  
That we schuln deye," etc.

Decker's old Fortunatus muses that, though his arm should conquer twenty worlds,

"There's a lean fellow beats all conquerors ;  
The greatest strength expires with loss of breath,  
The mightiest in one minute stoop to death."

Death a due debt, is the theme of an Elizabethan minor poet, unnamed :

"Death hath in the earth a right ;  
His power is great, it stretcheth farre ;  
No lord, no prince, can 'scape his might ;  
No creature can his dutie barre.  
The wise, the just, the strong, the hie,  
The chaste, the meeke, the free of hart,  
The rich, the poor, (who can denie ?)  
Have yeelded all unto his dart."

Or as a French contemporary of his, not without a name, —for it is Malherbe,—discourses :

"La Mort a des rigueurs à nulle autre pareilles ;  
On a beau la prier ;  
La cruelle qu'elle est se bouche les oreilles,  
Et nous laisse crier."

Pascal, again, in one of his *Pensées*, pictures mankind as a group of condemned prisoners, in chains, of whom some are daily cut off in the sight of their fellows, who await their turn, and know it to be inevitable when it shall come. Ever applicable is the voice of *Œdipus* to his daughters, when he feels his last hour so nigh, so very present indeed—

ὦ παῖδες, ἥκει τῷδ' ἐπ' ἀνδρὶ θέσφατος  
βίον τελευτῇ, κ' οὐκέτ' ἔστιν ἀποστροφῇ.

Chalmers dilates impressively on the details of the death-bed—the warning of death seen on the sick man's face, and how its symptoms gather and grow, and get the ascendancy over all the ministrations of human care and of human tenderness—when it every day becomes more obvious that the patient is nearing his end, and that nothing in the whole compass of art, or any of its resources, can stay the advance of doom—when, from morning to night, and from night to morning, the watchful family sit at his couch, and guard his broken slumbers, and interpret all his signals, and try to hide from

him their tears,—and then in a little while their despair, when they can only turn them to cry at his last agonies, so little is it that weeping children and inquiring neighbours can do for him, and so piteous is the contrast between the “unrelenting necessity of the grave, and the feebleness of every surrounding endeavour to ward it.” To feel one’s helplessness, even in the case of a dying brute, is saddening enough to a heart that does feel at all—as Burns bears record in his “unco mournfu’ tale” of the death of “puir Mailie,” his only pet yowe :

“Wi’ glowrin een, an’ lifted han’s,  
 Poor Hughoe like a statue stan’s.  
 He saw her days were near-hand ended,  
 But, wae’s my heart ! he could na mend it !  
 He gaped wide, but naething spak,” etc.

Tenderness, without a capacity of relieving, says Goldsmith, only makes the man who feels it more wretched than the object in need of assistance. Mrs. Trench, writing beside her baby’s sick-bed, expressively penned a wish, at a time when the first Napoleon was supreme in Europe, “that Buonaparte may have a sick child, as I think the cry of an infant, whose pain one cannot know or assuage, would make him feel his want of power, though nothing else has done it.” When by the bed of languishment we sit, as Young has pictured the session,

“Or, o’er our dying friends, in anguish hang,  
 Wipe the cold dew, or stay the sinking head,  
 Number their moments, and, in every clock,  
 Start at the voice of an eternity ;  
 See the dim lamp of life just feebly lift  
 An agonizing beam, at us to gaze,  
 Then sink again, and quiver into death,  
 The most pathetic herald of our own ;  
 How read we such sad scenes ?”

Feltham declares no spectacle to be more profitable, or more awful, than the sight a dying man, when he lies “ex-



piring his last"—to see all his friends, "like conduits, dropping tears about him ; while he neither knows his wants, nor they his cure ; nay, even the physician, whose whole life is nothing but a study and practice to preserve the lives of others, is now as one gazing at a comet, which he can reach with nothing but his eye." When the ruler's little child was dying, says a feeling commentator, what could he do but turn his back upon the house where was the darkened room, and the little bed, and the white little face laid upon the pillow, and the cold lips labouring with the rapid breath,—turn his back upon all these,—because *he* could do nothing to help, and hasten away along the lake side, going in his despair "to One mighty to save," and beseeching Him, "Lord, come down ere my child die !" St. Clare, in the American story, watching his Eva's last hour, has the despair without the resource : "They stood there so still, gazing upon her, that even the ticking of the watch seemed too loud. . . . The house was soon roused—lights were seen, footsteps heard, anxious faces thronged the verandah, and looked tearfully through the glass doors ; but St. Clair heard and said nothing—he saw only *that look* on the face of the little sleeper. . . . He saw a spasm of mortal agony pass over the face—she struggled for breath, and threw up her little hands. . . . They pressed around her in breathless stillness." A yet more popular writer than even the one here quoted works up an exclamatory description of the suspense, the fearful mute suspense, of standing idly by while the life of one we dearly love is trembling in the balance ; of the desperate anxiety "to be doing something" to relieve the pain, or lessen the danger which we have no power to remove—and the sinking of soul and spirit which the saddening conviction of our helplessness produces : "What tortures can equal these ? what reflections or

endeavours can, in the full tide and fever of the time, allay them?" Above all, if the distraught gazer is responsible in some degree for the fatal issue—as in a case pictured by Goethe, when the last malady seizes the being whose untimely grave you have prepared, "when languid and exhausted she lies before you, her dim eyes raised to heaven, and the damp of death upon her pallid brow, then you stand at her bedside like a condemned criminal, with the bitter feeling that your whole fortune could not save her, that all your efforts are powerless to impart even a moment's strength" to the ebbing life.

Dryden has a simile of "helpless friends, who view from shore the labouring ship, and hear the tempest roar." So those he is describing stood, as he describes them, with their arms across, not to assist, but to deplore the inevitable loss.

"Oh pain, when one sees  
This ebbing, receding,  
This gliding away  
From out of our clasp ;  
Which nothing can stay  
Despite our wild grasp !  
It ebbs like the sea,  
The vast mighty ocean  
That with a sure motion  
Recedes and is gone." \*

George Eliot tells us of Janet Dempster, as she sat on the edge of the bed through the long hours of candle-light, and watched her dying husband, and kept her left hand on the cold unanswering right hand that lay beside her on the bed-clothes, and heard no sound but her husband's breathing and the ticking of the watch on the mantelpiece—that she "only felt that the husband of her youth was dying ; far, far out of her reach, as if she were standing helpless on the shore, while he was sink-

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\* Charles Boner : On the Death of Madame Lindwurm.

ing in the black storm-waves." So runs again a stanza in one of Emily Brontë's poems, with a difference (in wave-colour) :

"An anxious gazer from the shore,  
I marked the whitening wave,  
And wept above thy fate the more  
Because I could not save."

What can any of us do, what have any of us done, another of the sisterhood has asked, who may have sat holding in our arms a dear form, from which the life was passing ?—the life for which gladly we would have given our own in exchange ; when we have felt and watched it fleeting from us, and we, ignorant and blind, vainly striving to arrest the inevitable doom. Another, again, describes a watcher that sees the lamp of life thus dying out for lack of oil, and has so consciously no power to re-illumine it. "In such moments it is that we feel our awful impotency, that we recognise ourselves as worms." That Henry Viscount Palmerston who died in 1802, lost in 1769 the wife, his epitaph on whom thus commences :

"Whoe'er like me with trembling anguish brings  
His heart's whole treasure to fair Bristol's springs ;  
Whoe'er like me, to soothe disease and pain,  
Shall pour those salutary springs in vain ;  
Condemned like me to hear the faint reply,  
To mark the fading cheek, the sinking eye,  
From the chilled brow to wipe the damps of death,  
And watch in dumb despair the shortening breath ;  
If chance directs him to this artless line,  
Let the sad mourner know his pangs were mine !"

When first the terrible thought came home to Nelly Le Strange, that her dear old father, Sir Adrian, was very ill—dying—she rebelled fiercely against it, pushed it violently from her. It could not, would not be,—it was too bad to happen,—and her soul "went up agonizedly" to the great God above her, in intercession for that dear old life. In nightly visions on her dark bed, she wrestled

and strove with the grisly phantom that drew so near, and whose was the presence that is not to be put by : " I would stand in the breach between him and my old man ; he should not come at him, should not smite him with that mighty blade that lays the generations low ; but to what purpose ? He has put me aside, he is drawing ever nigher, not stealthily, insidiously, but openly in the eye of day, so that all may count his strides and mark his coming." What torture, she elsewhere asks, can be comparable to that of standing, with one dearer to us than life, on the edge of that awfulest, blackest gulf, seeing him slipping, slipping down to it, and we unable to stretch out a finger to prevent the fall, or to help him back again up the kindly hither bank ?—" During all those dragging, weary hours I sat by him," says Eleanor of her father, " holding his hand ; as if *that* could keep him back from the gulf he was nearing." " It is hard work dying ; a bitter weary tussle ; but ah ! surely it is harder seeing another die." As she sat and listened to the gasping breath, that grew ever quicker, harder, shorter, it made her out of breath herself to hear him labouring, panting so. " How I longed to 'give him half my powers, to eke his being out !' " *De profundis* are drawn the *suspiria* sighed forth by the husband-poet of Kathrina :

" — Ah ! to wait for death :

To see one's idol with the signature  
Of the Destroyer stamped upon her brow,  
And know that she is doomed, beyond all hope ;  
To watch her while she fades ; to see the form  
That once was Beauty's own become a corpse  
In all but breathing, and to meet her eyes  
A hundred times a day—while the heart bleeds—  
With smiles of smooth dissembling, and with words  
Cheerful as mourning, and to do all this  
Through weeks and weary months, till one half-longs  
To see the spell dissolved, and feel the worst



That death can do : can there be misery  
Sadder than this ? ”

The grief is of the same kind, other in degree, with that expressed by Shakspeare’s Henry the Sixth in the case of his doomed uncle, whom he bewails

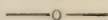
“ With sad unhelpful tears ; and with dimm’d eyes  
Looks after him, and cannot do him good.”

How in keeping and in season with the last scene of the last act of the tragedy is dying King John’s fevered appeal to the “ sad unhelpful ” bystanders,—

“ And none of you will bid the winter come,  
To thrust his icy fingers in my maw . . .  
And comfort me with cold :—I do not ask you much,  
I beg cold comfort ; and you are so strait,  
And so ingrateful, you deny me that.”

His son, the prince Henry, can but answer, weeping,

“ Oh that there were some virtue in my tears  
That might relieve you ! ”



## XLI.

### SENTENCE PASSED, EXECUTION DELAYED.

ECCLESIASTES viii. 11.

“ Raro antecedentem scelestum  
Deseruit pede Pœna claudo.”

BUT, because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. Of old had it been declared by the voice of Jehovah, “ To me belongeth vengeance and recompense ; their foot shall slide in due time : for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.” It is they that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart-rope, that say,

“Let Him make speed, and hasten His work that we may see it; and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it.” The scoffers of the last days it is, to whom the scoff is attributed, “Where is the promise of His coming?”—the promise, or, to them, the threat. Though it tarry, wait for it, might belief reply to unbelief in the same tone, if the same tone were possible on such a subject to devout belief: it will surely come, it will not tarry: to some extent the execution of the sentence may be delayed; but, sooner or later, execution is certain when sentence is passed.

*Habet Deus suas horas, et moras*, says the Latin proverb; and the Greek one is admired for energy of expression as well as fulness of meaning: Ὁψὲ Θεῶν ἀλέουσι μύλοι, ἀλέουσι δὲ λεπτά: The mill of God grinds late, but grinds to powder. So the English: “God comes with leaden feet, but strikes with iron hands.” The noiseless approach and advance of these judgments, the manner in which they overtake secure sinners even in the hour of their doom, are set forth again in what Archbishop Trench pronounces the “awfully sublime” adage, *Dii lancos habent pedes*: the feet of the (avenging) deities are shod with wool. “Who that has studied the history of the great crimes and criminals of the world, but will with a shuddering awe set his seal to the truth of this proverb?” *Sequitur superbos ultor a tergo Deus*, is a saw from Seneca; and to the name of Orpheus is referred this fragment about justice not being over long in overtaking ill-doers: Τοῖς δὲ κακῶς ῥέξασί δίκης τέλος οὐχὶ χρονιστὸν. It is the assured persuasion of Telemachus that “come it will,” the delayed hour of confusion to the intruders on his hearth and wasters of his substance, though in his impatience he cannot refrain from the cry, the bitter aspiration,

"Approach that hour ! insufferable wrong  
Cries to the gods, and vengeance sleeps too long."

Anon he has Mentor's word for it, that "blind they rejoice, though now, e'en now, they fall ; death hastes amain ; one hour o'erwhelms them all." Great criminals, says a popular French writer, bear about them a kind of predestination, which enables them to surmount all obstacles and to escape all dangers, till the moment which a wearied Providence has marked as the rock of their impious fortunes. Cowper tells us

"There is a time, and justice marks the date,  
For long-forbearing clemency to wait ;  
That hour elapsed, the incurable revolt  
Is punished, and down comes the thunder-bolt."

Juvenal has moralized on the same text as the Royal Preacher, about the heart of the sons of men being set in them to do evil, on the strength of delayed execution of the sentence against evil-doing. One is heard to reason, in his thirteenth satire, that the wrath of God, though dreadful, is but slow : "With tardy progress comes the avenging blow. If all the bad are punished, 'twill be long ere my turn comes to suffer in the throng" —and supposing the Powers to be not inexorable, that turn may never come at all :

"Ut sit magna, tamen certè lenta ira Deorum est.  
Si curant igitur cunctos punire nocentes,  
Quando ad me venient ? Sed et exorabile Numen  
Fortasse experiar."

Ariel denounces as "three men of sin" the princes that had been concerned in ousting Prospero from his dukedom, and whom a tempest had now wrecked on Prospero's island ; and thus that delicate spirit enforces the moral of his reminder :

"—But, remember  
(For that's my business to you) that you three

From Milan did supplant good Prospero,  
Exposed unto the sea, which hath requit it,  
Him, and his innocent child ; for which fond deed,  
The Powers, *delaying, not forgetting*, have  
Incensed the sea and shores, yea, all the creatures,  
Against your peace."

That moral laws do not work with the same rapidity as material laws, is a proposition discussed by Principal Caird, who suggests ethical reasons why the sequence of cause and effect is not equally rapid in the moral as in the physical world, and why every act of sin is not followed by an immediate penalty—why the hand that had just committed a ruthless act is not instantly struck palsied by the side, and why the remorse that sometimes attends a course of guilt, comes after a long interval, or settles down on the spirit at the close of life in gradually darkening, deepening horror, instead of being the immediate and universal consequence of sin.

"O Heavenly Justice ! if thou be delayed,  
On wretched sinners sharper falls thy rod,"

exclaims Tasso, or rather Fairfax for him. The delay is anything but a guaranty of impunity or oblivion :

Ἄλλ' οὐ, τὰν Διὸς ἀστραπὰν  
Καὶ τὰν οὐρανίαν Θέμιν,  
Δαρὸν γὰρ οὐκ ἀποίνητοι,

as the Chorus in the *Electra* is persuaded. The law's delay, in human tribunals, is a byword. The courts move too slow, by the testimony of the Old Judge himself. He cites the words from the bench of a fellow judge, who, sentencing a man for murder, told him that sooner or later punishment is sure to overtake the guilty: "the law moves slow, but it is sure and certain. Justice has been represented with a heel of lead, from its slow and measured pace, but its hand is a hand of iron, and its blow is death." An irreverent New Englander calls

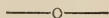


it a "funny sort o' figure of justice, that; when it's so plaguy heavy-heeled most any one can outrun it; and when its great iron fist strikes so uncommon slow, a chap that's any way spry is e'en a'most sure to give it the dodge." When the old clerk Sampson Wilmot says he's an old man, and has seen a good deal of the ways of this world, and has found that retribution seldom fails to overtake those who do wrong, Mr. Balderby shrugs his shoulder and doubts the force of that philosophy in the case of the prosperous wrongdoer whose career they are criticizing,—so long an immunity has the latter enjoyed: "I should scarce think it likely he would ever be called upon to atone" for his sins now. "I don't know, sir," rejoins the other; "I've seen retribution come very late; when the man who committed the sin had well-nigh forgotten it." To adapt the style of Octavio Piccolomini in Schiller,

"With light tread stole he on his evil way,  
And light of tread hath Vengeance stolen on him.  
Unseen she stands already, dark behind him—  
But one step more—he shudders in her grasp!"

A paragraph of Mr. Froude's first volume sounds the alarm of the time of reckoning for a national evil having at length arrived: slowly, as he traces it, the hand had crawled along the dial plate; slowly as if the event would never come; and wrong was heaped on wrong; and oppression cried, and it seemed as if no ear heard its voice; till the measure of the circle was at length fulfilled, the finger touched the hour, and "as the great hammer rang out above the nation, in an instant the mighty fabric of iniquity was shivered into ruins." As with nations and institutions, so, or rather much more pointedly and signally for the most part, with individual transgressors; a monitory voice in the *Sea Voyage* of Beaumont and Fletcher enforces the reminder—

“Vengeance, though slow-paced,  
At length o’ertakes the guilty ; and the wrath  
Of the incensèd Powers will fall most sure  
On wicked men when they are most secure.”



## XLII.

## A TAIN OF FOLLY IN THE WISE.

ECCLESIASTES x. i.

DEAD flies, saith the Preacher, cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking flavour ; and even “so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour.” The follies of the wise are proverbial, as coupled with fears of the brave, in Johnson’s sonorous line. Byron takes leave to conjecture that if the follies of fools were all set down like those of the wise, the wise (who seem at present only a better sort of fools) would appear almost intelligent. Be that as it may, there is nothing so absurd but what it may have been said by some philosopher, as Cicéro assures us : *nihil tam absurdum dici potest ut non dicatur à philosopho*. It was a favourite saw of Scott’s, that the wisest of our race often reserve the average stock of folly to be all expended upon some one flagrant absurdity. Dr. Croly moralizes on the frivolities which so often make the world stare at the latter years of famous men, when, following their own tastes, as he puts it, and scorning the little opinions of commonplace mankind, they “contemptuously trifle, and proudly play the fool.” Goldsmith’s citizen of the world is for admiring the wisdom of the wise man, and leaving the ignorant and the envious to ridicule his foibles : “the folly of others is ever more ridiculous to those who are themselves most foolish.” As Béranger sings,

"Même au manteau de la Sagesse  
La folie attache un grelot."

Or again, as Molière's Valère has it, "C'est une chose admirable, que tous les grands hommes ont toujours quelque petit grain de folie mêlé à leur science." Molière himself, *tout philosophe qu'il était d'ailleurs*, incurred at home the ridicule he had so often exposed on the stage. It is good, said Macaulay, to be often reminded of the inconsistency of human nature, and to learn to look without wonder or disgust on the weaknesses which are to be found in the stronger minds: Dionysius, for instance, in old times, and Frederick in the last century, with capacity and vigour equal to the conduct of the greatest affairs, united all the little vanities and affectations of provincial blue-stockings. Philosophers assure us there is no limit to the absurdity of the guises which vanity will make a man ready to put on: the affectation of clever people has become a proverb. "A great poet or a great lawyer may be found to divide the palm of affectation with the emptiest little miss in the room." And, oddly enough, foibles and faults and weaknesses are the favourite devices of affected persons, who will pretend to be in bad health when they are perfectly well, and adopt a silly lisp when they can much more conveniently speak plain, and resort to tricks of gait or gesture when the tricks are a downright trouble to them; the men and women who are most guilty of these follies being moreover just those who might most safely trust to their real character for esteem and admiration. "The pleasure which really able persons derive from passing themselves off as great fools, must be one of the most curious in the whole repertory of human joys." But the follies of the wise are not always or merely affectations. A man less affected than the author of the vigorous line which has made "follies of the wise"

proverbial,—Dr. Johnson,—it might not be easy to name; and Johnson it is that Lord Macaulay ridicules for his “childish prejudices” and superstition, under the spell of which, as if smitten by enchantment, his mind would dwindle away from gigantic elevation to dwarfish littleness; so that listeners who had just been admiring its amplitude and its force, were now as much astonished at its strange narrowness and feebleness as the fisherman in the Arabian tale, when he “saw the Genie, whose stature had overshadowed the whole sea-coast, and whose might seemed equal to a contest with armies, contract himself to the dimensions of his small prison, and lie there the helpless slave of the charm of Solomon.” One is reminded of what an apologist for Luther sees in the mental *phantasmagoria* of so illustrious a man—viz., an exhibition to which no one who reveres his name would needlessly direct an unfriendly or an idle gaze. The very infirmities of our nature are said often to afford the best measure of its strength. When succeeding ages and different climes have agreed in affirming that *tel homme était grand*; then, as M. de Barante contends, “en vain épluchez-vous des anecdotes qui nous le montrent rempli de petites choses : cela se peut, mais il était grand,” for a’ that, and a’ that, and twice as much as a’ that. “Wisest men have erred,” chant the Chorus in *Samson Agonistes*, “and shall again, pretend they ne’er so wise.” Fools and wise men, it has been said, are not two separate nations, with a sea rolling between them, but two neighbours each of a common border-land; and in this border-land are many whose nationality it is sometimes hard to decide upon.

With all his admiration for the Emperor Julian, Gibbon speaks of his waking visions, induced by abstinence and fanaticism, as almost degrading him to the level of an Egyptian monk. The maxim *Nullum magnum ingenium*



*sine mixtura dementiæ*, is declared by Bayle not to include Cardan, with whom the folly, he asserts, is improved by talent, not the talent marred by folly—visionary of the first class though Cardan be. The “sublime genius,” as Scott deems it, of Napier of Merchiston, had its weak points: like Newton, he wasted time on guesses at prophecy in its most recondite texts. The eminent engraver, William Sharp, though in the ordinary transactions of life a man of shrewdness, was notoriously, in matters of science and religion, a visionary and an enthusiast—no imposture being too gross for his belief, and no evidence sufficiently strong to disabuse his mind: the doctrines of Mesmer, the rhapsodies of Richard Brothers, and the extravagances of Johanna Southcott, in turn found in him a warm disciple; and, in the last case, as his biographers prove, an easy and liberal dupe. The dream of Sir Walter Raleigh concerning the golden city and country of Eldorado, satisfies Adam Smith that “even wise men are not always exempt from such strange delusions.”

If we read of Cardinal Richelieu one day as guiding the sword of Gustavus, stemming the Romish reaction, founding the absolute monarchy of France; the next day, he figures as on a level with “poor Dr. Goldsmith, when he wanted to exhibit his agility in jumping over a stick against a showman’s puppet”—for did not the Cardinal dance a saraband in the boudoir of Mary of Medici, castanets in hand, and in Andalusian attire, while giggling wholesale went on behind the arras? La Bruyère has a rap at the sort of wiseacres who *font de l’histoire de Socrate, qu’il ait dansé*. But Socrates dancing, and Richelieu,—*c’est différent*.

Frederick the Great, when things were at the very worst with him, could find amusement in composing an ode, at once feeble and profane (as Earl Stanhope calls

it), against the Duke of Cumberland ; and still feebler, still coarser, were the French rhymes in which, the very day after the battle of Rosbach, the illustrious victor took leave of the French army. "Alas, for human intellect to find even its glory thus blended with its shame!" Lord Brougham finds a strange contrast to the vigorous and daring policy of Catharine of Russia, in the "ebullitions of childish vanity" that so whimsically found vent in fantastic display and grotesque caprice. Lord Clive was the wonder of some of his friends when, in his busiest time, the year of Plassey, he could find leisure to hesitate and vacillate between two kinds of court suits, and be so particular in instructing his friend Mr. Orme, the historian, to send him "two hundred shirts, the best and finest you can get for love or money ; some of the ruffles worked with a border either in squares or points, and the rest plain." Men who smile over the quarrels of governments and kings, will perhaps squabble frantically over a fossil bone, as a shrewd writer observes, who is of opinion, indeed, that although intellectual pursuits have an unquestionable tendency to elevate the mind, their effect is not universal ; for if some of the most intellectual men have been among the noblest, many have been among the meanest of mankind.

The Preacher's text is thus paraphrased by Prior :

"Oft have I said, the praise of doing well  
Is to the ear as ointment to the smell.  
Now, if some flies perchance, however small,  
Into the alabaster urn should fall,  
The odours of the sweets inclosed would die ;  
And stench corrupt, sad change, their place supply.  
So the least faults, if mixed with fairest deed,  
Of future ill become the fatal seed ;  
Into the balm of purest virtue cast,  
Annoy all life with one contagious blast."

But there are lighter aspects and applications of the theme, to which something of tolerant mention may here be due.

The sportive element in great men is often so signally developed, that if all sportiveness be folly, some of them must be reckoned very foolish indeed. What most takes Mr. Emerson's fancy in the heroic class, is their hilarity. Sport he pronounces to be the bloom and glow of a perfect health. Mr. Motley is careful to tell us how merry William the Silent was at table—naturally jocose, and studiously so too. His apparent gaiety at momentous epochs, even in the darkest hours of his country's trial, was "censured by dullards, who could not comprehend its philosophy, nor applaud the flippancy" of the Prince of Orange. All the dearer to Montaigne was the memory of Socrates, for that the old man eloquent never refused to play at cob-nut, or ride the hobby-horse with the boys. With most men who have risen to eminence there has been observed an aptness, at times, to a wild mirth and an elasticity of humour which often astonish those more sober spirits, "the commoners of life." Cromwell would break off from the gravest and most pressing discussions, at the signal of an accidental jest, and romp like a boy—throwing about the cushions, pulling hair, and having a chase round the council table. There is a story of his suddenly breaking off from a pathetic colloquy with Lord Orrery, on the subject of childhood, which had brought the tears in their eyes, to ask him if he could play at leap-frog, and of their actually taking a leap or two on the spot,—his Highness delighting, as he went over the noble lord, to dig his knuckles in his back, and make him groan under the transit. Cromwell's alternation of austerity with unseasonable buffoonery is noted

by one of Rienzi's admirers, as paralleled in the case of that adventurous tribune. "He was a wise pope," says John Selden of that Holy Father who, when one that used to be merry with him before he was advanced to the popedom, refrained afterwards from coming to him, presuming him to be absorbed in governing the Christian world,—sent for his old associate, and insisted on being as merry as aforetime, if only to show the part foolery has in governing the world.

Samples of the sportive are not far to seek in any direction. Erskine's humour, according to Lord Brougham, was playful to buoyancy, and wild even to extravagance. Curran, when turned of sixty, was as playful as a child. Stately John Kemble could not resist joining some chimney sweeps in Park Lane in playing at marbles; and great was the veteran's glee to find he was still a master hand at taw—which he declared to be the best thing he "played." Leigh Hunt delights in describing Byron riding on his little boy's rocking-horse, "with a childish glee becoming a poet. Ah! why did he ever ride his Pegasus to less advantage?" Crabb Robinson bears record in his *Diary* (1813), that "Flaxman, of all the great men I ever knew, plays the child with the most grace." In the case of Robert Story, of Rosneath, his biographer observes that many, no doubt, would be inclined to question the stability and depth of religious principle and feeling, which could co-exist with such real and hearty enjoyment as he had in any joke, or whim, or ludicrous escapade. "But the living, devoted piety of the man was as sincere as his delight in wit and laughter and what, perhaps, some staid people would call 'tom-foolery,' was genuine."\* Archdeacon Hare somewhere says

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\* *Memoir of the Rev. Robert Story*, p. 97.



that sense must be very good indeed, to be as good as good nonsense. About what constitutes goodness of that kind, tastes will ever differ; but the absolute relish of some sort of nonsense by all sorts of distinguished men, is manifest enough, in all sorts of manifestations. Hazlitt used to contend that the English are almost the only people who understand and relish nonsense. We are not merry and wise, he said, but indulge our mirth to excess and folly: when we trifle, we trifle in good earnest; and, having once relaxed our hold of the helm, drift idly down the stream. "All we then want is to proclaim a truce with reason, and to be pleased with as little expense of thought or pretension to wisdom as possible." Jack of Dover, whose *Privie Search for the Veriest Foole in England* (1604) the Percy Society has reprinted, is applauded in *Gryll Grange* as one who looked for excellent fooling, such as under the semblance of folly was both merry and wise: he did not look for mere unmixed folly, of which there was never a deficiency; the fool he looked for was one which it takes a wise man to make—a Shakspearian fool. Hogarth, as one of the members of the celebrated Nonsense Club, was singularly fond of elaborate drolleries. Horace Walpole, a sufficient contrast, in some of his letters avowedly "set down the first thing that came into" his head, for, "in truth, I have a little partiality for nonsense." When Johnson, in the imaginary conversation, bids Horne Tooke "don't play the fool,"—"Alas! it is the only game I have ever learnt to play," rejoins the latter, "but I dislike to play it single-handed. Come along, Doctor!" *The Doctor*,—Southey's,—quotes Beaumont and Fletcher, in answer to the exclamatory "More fooling!" of Dr. Dense:

"But do you know what fooling is? true fooling,—  
The circumstances that belong unto it?"

For every idle knave that shows his teeth . . .  
Is not a fool at first dash."

It is easy, *the* Doctor adds, to talk of fooling and of folly, *mais d'en savoir les ordres, les rangs, les distinctions ; de connaître ces différences délicates qu'il y a de Folie à Folie ; les affinités et les alliances qui se trouvent entre la Sagesse et cette même Folie*, as Saint Evremond says—to know this is not under every one's nightcap. "Such facetiousness," says Barrow, "is not unreasonable or unlawful which ministereth harmless divertisement and delight to conversation ; harmless, I say, that is, not entrenching upon piety, not infringing charity or justice, not disturbing peace." As the mists of moody sadness rolled away from Luther's "robust mind," it yielded itself to an enjoyment of what Sir James Stephen calls the broad humour, the "glorious profusion of sense and nonsense," which characterized Doctor Martin's hours of relaxation. Saint Francis of Assisi figures in hagiology as given to jocularities of the kind usually distinguished as practical ; these, if not eminently ludicrous, are owned to have been, at least, very practical jests. Of Xavier, again, we read that his was a sanctity which, at fitting seasons, *in loco*, could disport itself, *desipere*, in jests and trifling. There is in all real genius, said a late author, so much latent playfulness of nature, it almost seems as if genius never could grow old. *Bien drôle, bien buffon*, this, with or without genius, Voltaire essayed and managed to be ; and the buffoonery went on increasing with age, and not getting any the lovelier for it. If the Abbé Galiani is justly accredited with grand thoughts, lofty enough, sublime enough, to be worthy of Vico, if not of Plato, quite as unquestionable is his reputation for an abrupt resort to puns and buffooneries and unbridled nonsense.

What Burns professedly most valued in such a friend

as he had in Robert Anslie, was, that he could talk nonsense to him without forfeiting any degree of his esteem ; and fervently he expressed his trust that his Christian namesake, though "not such a hopeless fool as I," would never "grow so very wise that you will in the least disrespect an honest fellow because he is " constitutionally given to fooling. Moore records of Sydney Smith, "He never minds what nonsense he talks, which is one of the great reasons of his saying so much that is comical." If we knew nothing of Elia but his *All Fools' Day*, we should be well assured of the degree of *dulce* he found in *desipiendo*. Of him personally, however, Mr. de Quincey bears witness, "Both Lamb and myself had a furious love for nonsense, headlong nonsense. Excepting Professor Wilson and myself, I have known nobody who had the same passion to the same extent." Southey would perhaps have resented his exclusion from this first class of graduates, or masters of arts, in select admirable fooling,—to judge at least by his pertinaciously pronounced relish for it, in his correspondence at large, early and late, with women as with men, with old as with young. His "right to talk nonsense" was very dear to him, and jealously he enforced it, sometimes with riotous ostentation and aggressiveness. Almost piteous is his lament to his old friend Grosvenor Bedford, that "two men who love nonsense so cordially, and naturally, and *bonâfidelically*, as you and I, should be 300 miles asunder. For my part I insist upon it that there is no sense so good as your honest genuine non sense." What wig, he asks,—bishop's, speaker's, chancellor's,—so respectable a covering for the head as the cap and bells? As an elderly man, he thanked Heaven that he retained a good many childish tastes ; he liked gooseberry pie as well as ever of old, and he was very ready to play the fool wherever he felt himself sufficiently at home.

We find the late Bishop Lonsdale writing of the ex-Principal of Haylebury College, who was then not far from eighty, "It is very pleasant to find that Le Bas has not lost his fun, but is still, not kicking, but prancing, as playfully as ever. I have a real respect for him." The Bishop himself, at the same age, might have been described in the same words. He once astonished a young curate by exclaiming to the Master of the Temple, in that plaintive tone of his which gave piquancy to his humour, "Oh, Robinson, they have no such fun at Cambridge now as we had." M. Guizot is careful to let us know of Casimir Périer, that cold and distant as he was to outsiders, at home he was lively and humorous, amusing himself with a thousand "puerilities of social life" such as are "despised at present when the affectation of solemnity is the prevailing fashion of the mind." But then fashions change, and so fast!

Whatever is good and virtuous may be, on Seneca's showing, obscured, practically "extinguished," by levity, properly so called. *Quicquid est boni moris levitate extinguitur.* It is the dead fly in the ointment. Discretion is honoured by Addison as the quality which gives a value to all the rest, and without which, learning is pedantry and wit impertinence; virtue itself looks like weakness; and the best parts only qualify a man to be more sprightly in errors, and active to his own prejudice. Of world-wide interpretation and significance is the allegory told of the Duke of Orleans, that all the gifts and graces heaped upon him by the fairies invited to his christening, were cancelled by the provision of the fairy who was not invited, that he should be unable to turn them to account. The homely phrase about this or that dullard having had a rock too much in his cradle, is commended by Shenstone as a most expressive idiom



to describe a dislocated understanding ; an understanding, for instance, which, like a watch, discovers a multitude of parts betokening a designed system of perfection ; yet which, by some unlucky jumble, falls infinitely short of it. Macaulay said of Petrarch, that Nature meant him to be the prince of lyric writers, but by one fatal present deprived her other gifts of half their value : he would have been a much greater poet had he been a less clever man : his ingenuity was the bane of his mind. On the other hand, Goethe makes his Tasso lament, in the instance of Antonio, that

“When round his cradle all the gods assembled  
To bring their gifts, the Graces were not there ;  
And he who lacks what these fair powers impart,  
May much possess, and much communicate,”

but is a defaulter whose one thing lacking is a parlous want indeed. Fiction delights in tracing instances of some such radical deficiency. Lord Lytton's Margrave is seen to be wanting in that mysterious something which is needed to keep our faculties, however severally brilliant, harmoniously linked together. The Mrs. Pembroke of the *Canterbury Tales*, lovely in person, accomplished, and sensible, with a benevolence of nature that made her to every one she thought inferior to herself a ministering angel, has the fatal foible of absurd susceptibility to her “rights” in society, which become at last the only subject of her conversation, the unremitting cause of domestic contention and rage. The Philip Earnscliffe of Mrs. Edwardes' early story, excellent of heart, and sensitively regardful of honour, lives a blighted life because his will is weak, his resolutions wavering. If the head be giddy, says one of our old divines, it is not the absolute entire perfection of all the other parts of the body, that can suffice to regulate and direct so much as any one action of life. “The whole

tenour of a man's behaviour in this case is like the motion of a watch that has a fault in the spring ; he is rendered utterly useless, as to all great and considerable purposes." Constantly in critical notices of more or less eminent statesmen, we come across regretful remarks on the degree of eminence they missed, from some one thing wanting. Count Molé, says a foreign reviewer, would have been a first-rate statesman, but for his want of perseverance. Romilly deplored in Brougham a want of judgment and prudence that went far to foil his splendid talents. The late Sir James Graham, "with talents almost unequalled," was referred to as a striking proof of the utter insufficiency in England of any intellectual qualifications to recommend a man who is not believed to be sincere. Admirers of M. Victor Hugo are earnest in their expressions of regret, in the interests of poetic art, that a man gifted as he has been should have spoiled so much work by mere incapacity to act as his own critic : what a magnificent artist, they exclaim, he might have been, if, to all his other gifts, the prodigality of nature had added temperance and sanity. Wanting which, he is, by the judicious, when weighed in the balance, found wanting indeed.

We pass on to glance here and there at a salient example, or warning, of a life marred, foiled, or enfeebled by the taint of some one vice, foible, demerit, or defect. A licentious passion was the fatal flaw to what Gibbon calls the "shining accomplishments," of Victorinus. Base subserviency to his infamous wife degraded the else noble and attractive character of Belisarius.

"Not one line in the horoscope of Time  
Is perfect. Oh, what falling off is this,  
When some grand soul, that else had been sublime,  
Falls heedlessly amiss,  
And stoops its crested strength,"

as he did. All the brilliant qualities of Maximilian I. were marred by his levity of character. All the good qualities of the great, or at any rate the greatest, Earl of Essex were rendered useless to his country, and even dangerous to his friends, by his overweening vanity and ambition. Joanna Baillie designed to represent in De Montfort a man whose fine qualities were neutralized by one dark passion—

“Who, but for one dark passion, . . .  
Had claimed a record of as noble worth  
As e'er enriched the sculptured pedestal.”

The Earl of Leicester writes home from Flanders, of Count Hollock, that he “is a wise gallant gentleman, and very well esteemed. He hath only one fault, which is drinking . . . and this fault overthrows all.” One of the admirers of Count Konigsegg affirmed of him, that he wanted only an additional grain of salt in his composition, to be one of the greatest men of his age; and the more critical allowed the affirmation to be just. What the exact want might be, they would perhaps have differed about, or would have indefinitely defined it after the manner of Sir Joshua Reynolds, when criticizing a certain picture as a capital composition; the drawing correct, the colour, tone, chiaroscuro excellent; “but—but—it wants, hang it, it wants—*That!*” snapping his finger; and, wanting “that,” though it had all besides, it was a provoking failure.

It was said of Catharine II. of Russia, coarsely but truly, that she would have been great indeed but for the excess of two qualities,—the love of man, and the love of glory. Wedderburn (Lord Loughborough) would have been upon the whole a great man, were it possible to be so without some share of public virtue; and of that he had none. Swift said of Doctor Sheridan, that, generous, honest, and good-natured as he was, his per-

petual want of discretion made him act as if he were neither generous, honest, nor good-natured; and of Richard Brinsley the complaint of his heartiest admirers was, that indolence marred from the first what might have been so splendid a career. The judgment of Alceste is of wide application :

“ Qu'il ne faut que ce faible à décrier un homme ;  
Et qu'eût-on d'autre part cent belles qualités,  
On regarde les gens par leurs méchants côtés.”

Of Porson it has been said, that, but for one vice, he would have earned and retained a name, both in literature and life, as spotless and venerable as that of Casaubon or Melancthon. Though, in a life of no long duration, he achieved much, yet he fell far short of the prize of his high calling. One vice in him was “a just equinox to his virtue.” *Hélas !* as Balzac sighs it over one of his characters : *toutes ces belles qualités étaient ternis par un épouvantable vice*. George Herbert's sum of blessings, privileges, endowments, closes with the sad couplet—

“ Yet all these fences and their whole array  
One cunning bosom-sin blows quite away.”

\* \* \* \* \*

Pope's Chloe is marred to the uttermost by one thing wanting ; wanting which, what avail her other perfections, such as they are ?

“ ‘ Yet Chloe sure was found without a spot.’  
Nature in her then erred not, but forgot.  
‘ With every pleasing, every prudent part,  
Say, what can Chloe want ? ’—She wants a heart.”

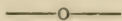
Shakspeare's Ferdinand in the *Tempest*, professes to have liked several women, yet never any with so full soul, but some defect in her did quarrel with the noblest grace she owned, and put it to the foil. His Sir Proteus protests that were man



"But constant, he were perfect : this one error  
Fills him with faults ; makes him run through all sins."

His Hotspur is rebuked by Worcester for giving way to a petulance such as, "haunting a nobleman, loseth men's hearts ; and leaves behind a stain upon the beauty of all parts besides, beguiling them of commendation." But the passage in Shakspeare most, perhaps, to the purpose,—especially with regard to the closing lines, as suggestive of the Scripture simile of dead flies in ointment,—is that in which Hamlet philosophizes on the fact, that oft it chances in particular men, that, for some vicious mode of nature in them, or by some cherished habit,

" ——— that these men,—  
Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect ;  
Being nature's livery, or fortune's star,—  
Their virtues else (be they as pure as grace,  
As infinite as man may undergo),  
Shall in the general censure take corruption  
From that particular fault : The dram of base  
Doth all the noble substance often dout,  
To his own scandal."



### XLIII.

#### CASTING BREAD UPON THE WATERS.

ECCLESIASTES xi. i.

THE promise that bread cast upon the waters, that seed sown broadcast by the sower beside all waters, even upon them when the floods are high, shall be found after many days, is from Him that elsewhere hath declared, that as the rain cometh down, and the snow, from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater ; so shall

His word be that goeth forth out of His mouth ; it shall not return unto Him void ; but it shall accomplish that which He pleaseth, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto He sent it. And “blessed are they that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass. “He that observeth the wind shall not sow ; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.” Sky-gazing is not work, and to be over weather-wise is the reverse of wisdom. Therefore, “In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand, for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.” The harvest may be late. Though it tarry, wait for it. The seed may not yield its increase for awhile, till the floods abate and the dry land re-appears ; but thou shalt find it after many days.

We may apply the suggestive and finely expressed lines of Wordsworth :

“And when the stream  
Which overflowed the soul was passed away,  
A consciousness remained that it had left,  
Deposited upon the silent shore  
Of memory, images and precious thoughts,  
That shall not die, and cannot be destroyed.”

*Non colit arva bene, qui semen mandat arenæ*, says the mediæval proverb ; but between the sands of this saw, and the waters of the text, there is a (literally) substantial difference—the substratum of a submerged but fertile and finally remunerative soil. Jeremy Taylor finely speaks of agencies and results which though to us they are like water spilt, yet to God are “as water fallen into the sea, and united in His comprehension and enclosures.” It is a loyal faith in such assurances that enables a worker to comply with the injunction to be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of

the Lord, forasmuch as he knows that his labour is not in vain in the Lord.

We read of Julia Dodd, in Mr. C. Reade's matter-of-fact romance, that she diligently visited the wretched Barkington, gave him good books, read to him, and "ploughed his heart with her sweet voice, and sowed the good seed in the furrows—seed which, like wheat or other grain, often seems to fall flat and die, but comes out green after many days." Cooper's Deerslayer edified by the earnestness of simple Hetty's account of her interview with the Red Indians in their camp, she, as usual, with her Bible in her hand: "When I read the texts to the chiefs, you could not have seen that they made any changes on their minds; but if seed is planted it *will* grow. God planted the seeds of all the trees—," "Ay that did He, that did He," muttered Deerslayer; "and a goodly harvest has followed." "God planted the seeds of all the trees," continued Hetty, after a moment's pause, "and you see to what a height and shade they have grown! So it is with the Bible. You may read a verse this year, and forget it, and it will come back to you a year hence, when you least expect to remember it." There is a simile in the laureate's *Golden Year*,

" — As if the seedsman, rapt  
Upon the teeming harvest, should not dip  
His hand into the bag: but well I know  
That unto him who works, and feels he works,  
This same grand year is ever at the doors."

The text of casting bread upon the waters was in frequent use with Coleridge, who, in the *Aids to Reflection*, for instance, referred to the contradistinction of the understanding from reason as a point for which during twenty years, with a perseverance which nothing but the deepest conviction of its importance could have inspired,

"I have been contending, 'casting my bread upon the waters.'" One discourse of his begins with a modest hypothesis of his finding a reader for it. "Should he exist only in my imagination, let the bread float on the waters! If it be the Bread of Life, it will not have been utterly cast away." He would have said Amen in a deep voice to Arthur Hugh Clough's utterance of resignation, if not of patient hope,—

"Others, I doubt not, if not we,  
The issue of our toils shall see ;  
Young children gather as their own  
The harvest that the dead had sown,  
The dead, forgotten and unknown."

Blessed are the humble, are they that are *not* known, says Mr. Carlyle in the course of his description of Rachel's life as no idle one for herself or for others—so many souls may the "sparkles showering from that light-fountain" have kindled and illuminated; whose "new virtue goes on propagating itself, increasing itself, under incalculable combinations, and will be found in far places, after many days." He considers it beautiful to see and understand that no worth, known or unknown, *can* die even in this earth. The work an unknown good man has done he likens to a vein of water flowing under ground, secretly making the ground green; it flows and flows, it joins itself with other veins and veinlets; one day, it will start forth as a visible perennial well. "Nothing dies, nothing can die. No idlest word thou speakest but is a seed cast into Time, and grows through all Eternity." Hence a momentous import in the resolve,

"At least, not rotting like a weed,  
But, having sown some generous seed,  
Fruitful of further thought and deed,"

to pass, with the rest that are passing away, passing away. All work is as seed sown; it "grows and spreads,



and sows itself anew, and so, in endless palingenesia, lives and works." Good men, again to quote Mr. Carlyle, are, by a bountiful Providence, sent hither to disseminate goodness ; literally to *sow* it, as in seeds shaken abroad by the living tree. "For such, in all ages and places, is the nature of a Good Man ; he is ever a mystic creative centre of Goodness : his influence, if we consider it, is not to be measured ; for his works do not die, but being of Eternity, are eternal ; and in new transformation, and ever-wider diffusion, endure, living, and life-giving." No act of man, he insists, no thing, is extinguished when it disappears ; he has known a done thing work visibly three thousand years and more ; invisibly, unrecognized, all done things work through endless times and years. "A man's little Work lies not isolated, stranded ; a whole busy World, a whole native-element of mysterious never-resting Force, environs it ; will catch it up ; will carry it forward, or else backward ; always, infallibly, either as living growth, or at worst as well-rotted manure, the Thing Done will come into use." In God's world, contends Frederick Robertson, for those that are in earnest there is no failure : no work truly done—no word earnestly spoken—no sacrifice freely made, was ever made in vain. He lays stress upon the power of indirect influences ; those which distil from a life, not from a sudden, brilliant effort. "There is good done of which we can never predicate the when or where." We call the large majority of human lives obscure. "Presumptuous that we are !" exclaims Lord Lytton : "How know we what lives a single thought retained from the dust of nameless graves may have lighted to renown ?" He describes Genius as passing an apprenticeship with some Richard Avenel, without as yet detecting "what good and what grandeur, what addition even to the true poetry of the social uni-

verse, fractional existences like Richard Avenel's bestow." Each man of genius, though we never come across him, as his operations proceed, in places remote from our thoroughfare, is yet influencing the practical world that ignores him, for ever and ever. Not with the individual, as Dr. Thomas Brown puts it, perishes the influence ; nor when the world is deprived of those who have enlightened it, does it lose the illumination :—their wisdom, as it spreads from age to age, may be continually awaking some genius that would have slumbered but for them, and thus indirectly opening discoveries that, but for them, would have remained unrevealed. However untoward the immediate aspect of things may appear, the good man will know, says Julius Hare, that whenever he is labouring in the cause of heaven, the powers of heaven are working with him ; that, though the good he is aiming at may not be attainable in the very form he has in view, the ultimate result will assuredly be good ; that were man diligent in fulfilling his part, this result would be immediate ; and that no one who is thus diligent shall lose his precious reward, of seeing that every good deed is a part of the life of the world. "Courage! courage!" is Mrs. Browning's word to the wise :

"The soul of a high intent, be it known,  
Can die no more than any soul  
Which God keeps by Him under the throne ;  
And this, at whatever interim,  
Shall live, and be consummated  
Into the being of deeds made whole."

In vain the Princess Ida's counsellor urges, that her pains may only make that footprint upon sand which old-recurring waves of prejudice resmooth to nothing : "Let me tell you," she replies,

"Howe'er you babble, great deeds cannot die :  
They with the sun and moon renew their light  
For ever, blessing those that look on them."

Wherefore up and act, is her right royal summons, nor shrink for fear our solid aim be dissipated by frail successors. "Would, indeed, we had been, in lieu of many mortal flies, a race of giants, living, each, a thousand years, that we might see our own work out, and watch the sandy footprint harden into stone." But that may not be. Yet, as a younger poet phrases his benediction,

"Blessed art thou, O man ! for thou growest  
(O thou lord of the thought and the hand !)  
In the growth of whatever thou doest,  
And the ages await thy command.

\* \* \* \*

No man's labour for good is in vain,  
Tho' he win, not the crown but the cross.  
Every wish for man's good is a gain ;  
Every doubt of man's gain is a loss."

An historical critic says of Eckhart and the Mystics his fellow-workers, the only object of whose lives was the propagation of truth, that men of this stamp are sure to conquer the future ; that, little known as their names are at present, without their labours the Reformers would never have found a whole nation waiting to receive and ready to support them. He recognizes in them what the Lollards were to England—spirits who were at work in the dark, and whose life passed away unobserved. "They are persecuted, justly or unjustly—they suffer and die—and all they did seems to have been in vain." But suddenly we see their work, long marked as dangerous in the smooth current of society, rise above the surface like the coral-reefs in the Pacific, and it remains for centuries the firm foundation of a new world of thought and faith. In happier climes, and on a safer shore, the Addisonian Cato promises the brave youth, with love of virtue fired, who greatly in his country's cause expired, that he—

“ Shall know he conquered. The firm patriot there,  
Who made the welfare of mankind his care,  
Tho' still by faction, vice, and fortune crost,  
Shall find the generous labour was not lost.”

Later by some eighteen centuries fought and fell  
that “most unhappy man of men” whom, as a patriot,  
Wordsworth yet bade be of good cheer ; for,

“ Thou hast left behind  
Powers that will work for thee ; air, earth, and skies ;  
There's not a breathing of the common wind  
That will forget thee ; thou hast great allies ;  
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,  
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.”

Mr. Carlyle's sympathetic description of Friedrich Wilhelm trying that Jülich-and-Berg Problem by the pacific method, all his life, strenuously, and without effect, omits not, by way of conclusion, the consolatory or compensatory reflection, that “Result perhaps was coming, nevertheless ; at the distance of another hundred years.” One thing the historian claims to know : whatever rectitude and patience, whatever courage, perseverance, or other human virtue the king has put into this or another matter, is not lost ; nor is it, nor any fraction of it, to Friedrich Wilhelm and his sons' sons ; but “will well avail him and them, if not soon, then later, if not in Berg and Jülich, then in some other quarter of the Universe, which is a wide Entity and a long-lived.” Will Belton's homely motto is an approved one, that any good done in the world always pays. It is but a prosaic rendering of one phase of the poetical doctrine,

“ No stream from its source  
Flows seaward, how lonely soever its course,  
But what some land is gladdened. No star ever rose  
And set without influence somewhere. Who knows  
What earth needs from earth's lowest creature ? No life  
Can be pure in its purpose and strong in its strife



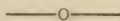
And all life not be purer and stronger thereby.  
 The spirits of just men made perfect on high,  
 The army of martyrs who stand by the Throne  
 And gaze into the Face that makes glorious their own,  
 Know this, surely, at last. Honest love, honest sorrow,  
 Honest work for the day, honest hope for the morrow,  
 Are these worth nothing more than the hand they make  
 weary? . . ."

As Romola walked, in plague-stricken Florence, often in weariness, among the sick, the hungry, and the murmuring, she felt it good, we are told, to be inspired by something more than her pity—by the belief in a heroism struggling for sublime ends, towards which the daily action of her pity could only tend feebly, as the dews that freshen the weedy ground to-day tend to prepare an unseen harvest in the years to come.

"Sow in the morn thy seed ; at eve hold not thy hand ;  
 To doubt and fear give thou no heed ; broadcast it o'er the land.  
 Beside all waters sow ; the highway furrows stock ;  
 Drop it where seeds and thistles grow ; scatter it on the rock.

\* \* \* \* \*

Thou canst not toil in vain ; cold, heat, and moist, and dry,  
 Shall foster and mature the grain for garner in the sky."



#### XLIV.

#### "PHYSICIAN, HEAL THYSELF."

ST. LUKE iv. 23.

HEBREW literature affords proof of the proverbial character of the sarcasm, "Physician, heal thyself." And the *Ἱατρὲ, θεράπενσον σεαυτὸν* of St. Luke has its classical correlatives in the *Κακὸς δ' ἱατρὸς ὢν τις* of Æschylus, and the *ἄλλων ἱατρὸς, κ.τ.λ.*, of Euripides. The application of the saying in the gospel is to those who show more favour to strangers than to their own kith and kin ; as in Virgil's *Hanc primum tutare domum*

But we may here regard the proverb in its more obvious and most general sense, and "instance" it accordingly. The Jews appear to have but paraphrased it, to dreadful purpose, when they said, in the very hour and the power of darkness, when darkness was over the land,—said of One mighty to save, and then and there dying to save them and the like of them, "He saved others, Himself He cannot save." In other than a literal sense may they be said to have there and then given Him vinegar to drink, mingled with gall.

In one of his familiar epistles to Rome's greatest orator, then dejected at the loss of Tullia, Sulpicius made this appeal: "Do not forget that you are Cicero; one who has been used always to prescribe for and give advice to others; do not imitate those paltry physicians who pretend to cure other people's diseases, yet are not able to cure their own; but suggest rather to yourself the same lesson which you would give in the same case." *Mali* are the *medici* who *ipsi se curare non possunt*, after all and in spite of all their professional professings. Æsop's fable is perennially instructive, touching the Frog and the Fox—when, once upon a time, as time goes in fable and faerie, a Frog made proclamation to all the beasts of the forest and field, that he was the ablest of physicians for maladies all and sundry; but was asked by the Fox how he dared, with those thin lantern jaws of his, and that pale meagre face, and that blotched spotted body, to set up for one who could cure the infirmities of others. So that expert in foxes rather than physicians, Crabbe's Gentleman-Farmer, who denounces the latter in mass as

"—Grave impostors, who will health ensure  
Long as your patience or your wealth endure.  
But mark them well, the pale and sickly crew,  
They have not health, and can they give it you?"

Among the epigrams, still admired for their neatness, of a Gascon poet of the seventeenth century, J. G. d'Astros, is one upon a physician who died of a catarrh in seven hours :—

“ La Parque le voulut surprendre,  
Et je trouve qu'elle eut raison ;  
Car sans l'avoir par trahison,  
Il eût pu d'elle se défendre.  
Hélas ! qui se croira plus fin  
Contre la mort qu'un médecin ? ”

Dr. South asks in one of his sermons, adverting to the study of physic, Do not many shorten their days, and lose their own health, while they are learning to restore it to others? Do they not get consumptions amongst receipts and medicines, and die while they are conversing with remedies? So Robert Blair takes his stand by The Grave, and says that

“ Here the great masters of the healing art,  
Those mighty mock defrauders of the tomb,  
Spite of their juleps and catholicons,  
Resign to fate. Proud Æsculapius' son,  
Where are thy boasted implements of art,  
And all thy well-crammed magazines of health ?

\* \* \* \*

Tell us, thou doughty keeper of the grave,  
Where are thy recipes and cordials now,  
With the long list of vouchers for thy cures ?  
Alas ! thou speakest not. The bold impostor  
Looks not more silly, when the cheat's found out.”

The curiosities of Epitaph literature contain this professed and professional *ipse dixit*, or *scripsit*, of a medical Quack :—

“ I was a quack, and there are men who say  
That in my time I physick'd lives away ;  
And that at length I by myself was slain  
With my own drugs, tak'n to relieve my pain.  
The truth is, being troubled with a cough,  
I, like a fool, consulted Dr. Gough,

Who physick'd me to death, at his own will,  
Because he's licensed by the State to kill.  
Had I but wisely taken my own physic,  
I never should have died of cold and 'tisick.  
So all be warn'd, and when you catch a cold,  
Go to my son, by whom my medicine's sold."

The closing line breeds shrewd suspicion as to the proper authorship of this copy of verses.

Readers of the Diary of the Rev. John Ward of Stratford upon Avon, may remember this entry: "There is a report of Hyppocrates, as if hee should say this in charge with physitians, that they should cure others with simples and compounds, and themselves with sack and claret." Readers,—another class, or possibly the same, for both books are light reading,—of the *Semi-detached House*, may remember how good Mrs. Hopkinson thinks she will take a hint about diet, by watching what Dr. Ayscough eats at her dinner-table: "You know he told us about Charlie, that all young meat, and pork, and raw vegetables, and sweet things, and pastry were bad; and, my dear, he dined on veal cutlets and roast pork, salad, and jam tarts, and plum pudding. I suppose doctors cure themselves when they get home after they have dined out." An eminent medical practitioner is mentioned in *The Doctor*, who could not refrain from eating toasted cheese, though he was subject to an alarming pulmonary complaint which was uniformly aggravated by it, and which terminated fatally at an age by no means advanced. Southey's Doctor would have said he must have been previously either a mouse or a rat, and in that pre-existent form had nibbled at such a bait—perhaps once too often. The same authority cited the instance of a physician of his acquaintance, then living, who at an autumnal dessert never ceased eating all the filberts he could lay his hands upon, though very candidly acknowledging that



they were exceedingly indigestible and hurtful things. On Daniel Dove's theory of pre-existence, this practitioner had been a squirrel, of course.

Satirical Kit Anstey, discoursing of the medicinal repute of the Bath waters and bathing, could not resist this fling at the faculty :—

“ But, what is surprising, no mortal e'er view'd  
Any one of the physical gentlemen stew'd ;  
Since the day that King Bladud first found out these bogs,  
And thought them so good for himself and his hogs,  
Not one of the faculty ever has tried  
These excellent waters to cure his own hide ;  
Though many a skilful and learned physician,  
With candour, good sense, and profound erudition,  
Obliges the world with the fruits of his brain,  
Their nature and hidden effects to explain.  
Thus Chiron advised Madame Thetis to take  
And dip her poor child in the Stygian lake,  
But the worthy old doctor was not such an elf  
As ever to venture his carcase himself.”

The Black Knight in *Ivanhoe* shrewdly took note that his hermit host, the Clerk of Copmanhurst, in setting an example of supping on the trencher of dried peas which, with a big can of water, constituted the evening repast, modestly put into a very large mouth, furnished with teeth which might have ranked with those of a boar both in sharpness and whiteness, some three or four of the peas, “a miserable grist as it seemed for so large and able a mill,”—and that, lavish as was the reverend man's praise of the water from St. Dunstan's well, yet, when he applied his black beard to the pitcher, he took a draught much more moderate in quantity than his encomium seemed to warrant. No wonder the knight told him that the small morsels he swallowed, together with the holy but somewhat thin beverage, must have thriven with him marvellously. But neither his physique nor his practice seemed in

keeping with his precepts in favour of so ascetic a diet. Hajji Baba in England records the doings of a dinner party which included a doctor, "evidently a man of great wisdom," to whom everybody lent a ready ear, for he gave a detailed and particular account of the nature of each dish at table: some he proscribed as totally forbidden; others he barely allowed to be tasted; there were about two which he said might lawfully be the food of man. "He, however, ate of every one himself." One of Theodore Hook's dining-out doctors is pictured "pegging away" at cold fowl, salmagundi, roasted oysters, and devilled turkey, for supper, despite all his previous tall talk about the unwholesomeness of supper in the abstract. "Well, Doctor," quoth a patient, "I see you do not exactly practise as you preach." "None of us do," is the reply. "When I was in town last, I dined with three physicians of the starving school, and two surgeons sworn to the Abernethian doctrine. I never saw five men eat or drink so much in the whole course of my life; and go where you will, watch the faculty, and you will find them the greatest gormandizers in the empire." Another of the same author's medical representative men, this time a professor of homœopathy, is watched by his involuntary host in the act of eating most ravenously of veal pie, ham, and salad, swallowing glass after glass of champagne, and munching pineapples as if they were turnips, until at length the half-angry half-amused looker-on is moved to say, "Well, Doctor, how do you find this mode of training and feeding suit your own book? I mean, how does it agree with yourself?" "Oh!" said Munx, "I—I don't attend to the rules myself: I have no constitutional disposition to any particular disease." Mr. Trollope tells us of his Doctor Thorne in the matter of summer drinks, that he commonly disapproved of such things for his

patients, as being apt to derange the digestion; "but he consumed enough himself to throw a large family into such difficulties." Physicians are the object of Philemon's sarcasm in one of the *γνώμαι* of the Greek anthology:—

Ὑπὲρ ἐγκρατείας τοῖς νοσοῦσιν εἰ σφόδρα  
Πίντας λαλοῦντας· εἴτ' εἰν παῖσιν οἱ τι,  
Αἰτοῖς ποιοῦντας πάνθ' ὅσ' οἱ κ' εἶων τότε  
Ἑτέροις.

But the proverb invites to a larger than merely professional application. An historical critic, admitting that Periander's reputed maxims are at variance with his practice, whence a suspicion of their authenticity, submits however that the inconsistency would be natural, "for reason makes our opinions, and circumstance shapes our actions." *Quelle mésintelligence*, exclaims La Bruyère (if so calm a writer can be ever said to exclaim), *entre l'esprit et le cœur! Le philosophe vit mal avec tous ses préceptes*. One of the things Zandoni says "with a bitter smile," is, that if it were necessary that practice square with precept, our monitors would be but few: the conduct of the individual, he maintains, can affect few but a small circle beyond himself; the permanent good or evil that he works to others lies rather in the sentiments he can diffuse. "His acts are limited and momentary; his sentiments may pervade the universe, and inspire generations till the day of doom. All our virtues, all our laws, are drawn from books and maxims, which *are* sentiments, not from deeds." Selden, in his *Table-talk*, takes the more popular and practical view of the matter: "Preachers say, Do as I say, not as I do. But if a physician had the same disease upon him that I have, and he should bid me do one thing, and he do quite another, could I believe him?" Such, remarks Bolingbroke, is the

imperfection of human understanding, such the frail temper of our minds, that abstract or general propositions, though ever so true, appear obscure or doubtful to us very often, till they are explained by examples; and that the wisest lessons in favour of virtue go but a little way to convince the judgment and determine the will, unless they are enforced by the same means; and we are obliged to apply to ourselves what we see happen to other men. Instructions by precept have the further disadvantage of coming on the authority of others, and frequently require a long deduction of reasoning. It is called the first rule in oratory, that a man must appear such as he would persuade others to be; and that can only be effected by the force of his life. Churchill accounts it mighty easy o'er a glass of wine on vain refinements vainly to refine,—

“And in each sentence, worthy of the schools,  
Varnish'd with sophistry, to deal out rules  
Most fit for practice, but for one poor fault,  
That into practice they can ne'er be brought.”

Philosophers, as Fielding says, are composed of flesh and blood as well as other human creatures; and however sublimated and refined the theory of these may be, a little practical frailty is as incident to them as to other mortals. It is indeed in theory only, and not in practice, that the difference is alleged to consist; for though such great beings think much better and more wisely, they always act exactly like other men. They know very well, says their satirist, how to subdue all appetites and passions, and to despise both pain and pleasure; and this knowledge affords much delightful contemplation, and is easily acquired. “But the practice would be vexatious and troublesome; and therefore the same wisdom which teaches them to know this, teaches them to avoid carrying it into execution.” There is a



philosopher in another of Fielding's works who is strenuous in defining *his* philosophy to be, not the bare knowledge of right and wrong, but an energy, a habit, as Aristotle calls it,—a long course of meditation reduced to a habit. We read in Ovid that a censorship is discharged, and an example given, when the vindicator of good morals himself practises what he takes upon him to preach:—

"*Sic agitur censura, et sic exempla parantur,  
Cum vitare, alios quod monet, ipse facit.*"

Seneca is stringent on the self-same text: men believe their eyes rather than their ears: long is the road by way of precept, short and sure that of example: "*Homines amplius oculis quam auribus credunt: longum iter est per precepta, breve et efficax per exempla.*" When Rasselas is charmed by the sage who can teach all that is necessary to be known, and who, from the unshaken throne of rational fortitude looks down on the scenes of life changing beneath him; when the young prince resolves with unquestioning enthusiasm to take this man for his future guide, to learn his doctrines, and imitate his life,—"*Be not too hasty,*" said Imlac, "*to trust, or to admire, the teachers of morality; they discourse like angels, but they live like men.*" And the next two or three pages prove the philosopher in request to be not one whit above his fellows; and the prince goes away from his presence convinced of the emptiness of rhetorical sound. The practice of men, says Sir Thomas Browne in his *Religio Medici*, holds not an equal pace, yea and often runs counter to their theory: "*we naturally know what is good, but naturally pursue what is evil: the rhetorick wherewith I persuade another cannot persuade myself.*" Byron chuckled crowingly over Beccaria when he was told in Italy of that philosopher, who had published "*such admirable things against the punishment of*

death," that as soon as his book was out, his servant, "having read it, I presume," stole his watch, and the master, while correcting the proofs of a second edition, did all he could to have the man hanged.

"For though to the strict letter of the law  
We bind our neighbours, yet, in our own cause,  
We give a large and liberal construction  
To its free spirit,"

quoth Rolando in Tobin. Boswell once heard Dr. Johnson observe, "There is something noble in publishing truth, though it condemns one's self." And one who said in his presence, that he had no notion of people being in earnest in their good professions, whose practice was not suitable to them, was thus reprimanded by him: "Sir, are you so grossly ignorant of human nature as not to know that a man may be very sincere in good principles, without having good practice?" For all which, notwithstanding, Dr. Johnson would have been the last man to deny the force of example as compared or contrasted with precept; or the verity of Butler's teaching, that in the case of principles and practice,

"No argument like matter of fact is ;  
And we are best of all led to  
Men's principles by what they do."

The challenge in Juvenal is not always a safe one, *Experiere hodie numquid pulcherrima dictu . . non præstem vitâ, nec moribus, et re*, etc. All too ironical is the Duke's eulogy of Angelo :

"—— His life is parallel'd  
Even with the stroke and line of his great justice ;  
He doth with holy abstinence subdue  
That in himself, which he spurs on his power  
To qualify in others."

That austere lord deputy, with all his fair show in the flesh, of superiority to it, was no such perfect practitioner. Rather he was to be consigned to the category of those

"ungracious pastors" of whom Ophelia spoke, when she thanked Laertes for his excellent counsel, and hoped withal he would abide by it in his own life and conversation :

" — But, good my brother,

Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,  
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven ;  
Whilst, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,  
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,  
And recks not his own read."

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## XLV.

### *BLIND-LED BLIND.*

ST. LUKE vi. 39.

ONE of our Lord's parables consists of two notes of interrogation. "Can the blind lead the blind? Shall they not both fall into the ditch?" "Ye blind guides!" is again and again His graphic denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, against whom, for their hypocrisy and for their wilful blindness, and for their blindfold misleading of the blind, His message was an iteration of Woe upon Woe. The light of the body is the eye. If that eye be evil, the whole body is full of darkness. "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" If the guide thou followest be sightless, whither mayest thou not be led astray!

He that made the eye, shall He not see? And to Him alone,\* in the first instance, and the last, pertains

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\* The suggestive supposition is made by Dr. Reid, that it had been as uncommon to be born with the power of sight as it is now to be born incapable of it, in which case "the few who had this rare gift would appear as prophets or inspired teachers to the many."—*Reid's Inquiry into the Human Mind*, chap. vi., sect. 2.

the right, the power, to say, "I will bring the blind by a way that they know not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight." Other guides will often assume the same style, and promise the like outcome. But, being blind, they say they see, and their sin remaineth; and those they lead end where themselves end—in the ditch.

The leader of the wain, in Spenser's allegory, bids fair (if foul can be fair) for the ditch:

"May seeme the wayne was very evil ledd,  
When such an one had guiding of the way,  
That knew not whether right he went or else astray."

Shakspeare's Cressid, so apt to do foolish things, was not incapable of uttering wise ones, as where she laments,—

"Ah! poor our sex! this fault in us I find,  
The error of our eye directs our mind:  
What error leads, must err."

Ignis Fatuus is the speaker, in Goethe's Walpurgisnacht, on the Hartz Mountains, when Faust and his evil genius are reminded,—

"And if as guide you choose a meteor's light,  
You must not wonder should we go astray."

The moral of La Fontaine's fable of the Serpent's Head and Tail points in the same direction. The tail goes first, and ill comes of it. In broad daylight the tail, a self-assuming guide, sees not a whit better than were it pitch dark. Of course the now misplaced head suffers. One misleading, the other is misled. Now the sightless mass jostles against a rock, now against a tree, now against a passenger; and the end is destruction. Wretched, exclaims La Fontaine, are the people that are in such a case; most unblessed the State that



is thus misled! *Malheureux les Etats tombés dans son erreur!*

The fool Trinculo, in the *Tempest*, is no fool when, a disgusted witness of the semi-brute Caliban's tipsy worship of the drunken butler Stephano, he exclaims, "The folly of this island! They say, there's but five upon this isle: we are three of them: if the other two be brained like us, the State totters."

For, where there is no vision, the people perish. Heathenism recognized thus much, after a sort. Plutarch relates of declining and falling Athens in the days of Phocion, that the disturbances at the sacred rites "gave many of the people occasion to reflect on the difference of the divine dispensation in the present and in ancient times. Formerly, said they, mystic visions were seen, and voices heard, to the great happiness of the State. . . . But now, during the same ceremonies, the gods look without concern upon the severest misfortunes that can happen to Greece." No vision now; and a people perishing. A wonder and horrible thing, as the inspired son of Hilkiah reckoned it, was committed in the land, when the prophets prophesied falsely, and the priests bore rule by their means, and God's people loved to have it so; and what would they do in the end thereof? When the Son of Man was moved with compassion on the multitudes, it was because they were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. In a sad sense is it true of many a flock, that when one entereth the fold who is not the good shepherd, they hear his voice, and follow him; while perhaps the good shepherd, as a stranger, will they not follow, but will flee from him; though only by him can they go in and out, and find pasture; and though he alone is the good shepherd that giveth his life for the sheep. He that once upon Mars Hill at Athens preached to novelty-loving Athens

their own Unknown God, would have told them of their visions at the best, that in the words of a Hebrew prophet, the idols but spoke vanity, and the diviners saw a lie and told false dreams. That this people, like God's own people, had been destroyed for lack of knowledge—going their way as a flock, and troubled because there was no shepherd. That there was such a thing as wandering from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east,—running to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and failing to find it; ever learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. “Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge.” The vision of all was become to them as the words of a book that is sealed, which the learned cannot read because it is sealed, and the unlearned cannot read because he is unlearned. The wisdom of the wise has perished, and the understanding of the prudent is hid. “For I beheld, and there was no man, even among them, and there was no counsellor, that, when I asked, could answer a word.” There is no counsel in the grave. And it may be said that where there is no counsel there is the grave. Where no vision, the people perish. To those who will not be learned nor understand, but walk on still in darkness, all the foundations of the earth are out of course. Chaos is come again. There may be a way that seemeth right to a man—a blind man—but the end thereof is death. It is a way of darkness that deepens darker and darker unto the perfect night.

Nor is help availing from this, that, or the other dim-sighted neighbour, nor from any number put together of such. It is with them as with the baffled seeker in Crabbe's tale :

“Alas ! when men who feel their eyes decay,  
Take more than common pains to find their way,

Yet, when for this they seek each other's aid,  
Their mutual purpose is the more delay'd.

Many a paraphrase of the proverb of blind-led blind, and of a perishing people where there is no vision, might be cited, in one form of words or another, often quaint, always telling and expressive, from the histories and miscellanies of Mr. Carlyle. It is a trite theme with him, the need of what he calls Men with an Eye, to lead those who need guidance. We might apply what Shakespeare's Gloster, in *King Lear*, says, after his eyes have been barbarously put out, and he seeks a guide in Mad Tom, and is warned, "Alack, Sir, he's mad : "

"'Tis the time's plague, when madmen lead the blind."

Ill fare the peoples that take up with blind guides. Like Elymas, when there fell upon him a mist and a darkness, they go about seeking some one to lead them by the hand. Some one, any one. Who will show us any good—who will deliver us from this hour and power of darkness? And sometimes he that is struck blind takes for guide him that is born blind. And straight-way they make for the ditch.

St. Gregory the Great, in his treatise on the Pastoral care, vigorously censures those who, without proper qualifications, undertake the care of souls, which he calls the art of all arts. Who does not know, he says, that the wounds of the mind are more difficult to be understood than those of the body? and yet men unacquainted with the spiritual precepts will profess themselves physicians of the heart, while those who are ignorant of the effects of drugs would blush to set up for physicians of the body. And anon he quotes the proverb of the blind-led blind. In no such connexion, and in no such spirit, Shelley quotes it, when describing priests and princes pale with terror, whose faith "fell, like a shaft loosed by the bowman's error, on their own hearts ;

“—— they sought and they could find  
No refuge—’twas the blind who led the blind.”

But, after all, there may be something worse than even a blind guide ; for, as South observes in his sermon on the fatal imposture of words, wherein he treats of that “great plague of the world, deception,” which takes wrong measures, and makes false musters almost in everything,—“A blind guide is certainly a great mischief ; but a guide that blinds those whom he should lead, is certainly a greater.” The proverb was full in South’s eye when, in another sermon, discussing the case of a man who exerts all the powers and faculties of his soul, and plies all means and opportunities in the search of truth which God has vouchsafed him, the preacher concludes that such a man may rest upon the judgment of his conscience so informed, as a warrantable guide of those actions which he must account to God for : “And if by following such a guide he fall into the ditch, the ditch shall never drown him.” But the same vigorous divine elsewhere deprecates a blind watchman as “equally a nuisance and an impertinence”—and such a paradox, both in reason and practice, he contends, is a deluded conscience, namely a counsellor who cannot advise, and a guide not able to direct. The will and the affections are made to follow and obey, not to lead or to direct ; and therefore, he goes on to say, if error has perverted the order, and disturbed the original economy of our faculties, and a blind will thereupon comes to be led by a blind understanding, “there is no remedy, but it must trip and stumble, and sometimes fall into the noisome ditch of the foulest enormities and immoralities.”



## XLVI.

### A DIVIDED SERVICE.

ST. MATTHEW vi. 24.

AS no man can serve two masters, no man can serve God and Mammon. Either in the word *μαμωνᾶς*, of Syriac origin, there is here a personification of Riches (*Lucrum Punice MAMMON dicitur*, says Augustine; and Jerome speaks of Riches being called *Gentili Syrorum lingua MAMMONA*); or, as some suppose, there was an idol of this name among the Syrians, identical with the Plutus of the Greeks. Mammon has, at any rate, his worshippers, and claims to be served. A false spirit, granted; but one that claims to be worshipped in spirit and in truth, as if he were true. In one respect he resembles the only True God, that he requires an undivided allegiance. There be gods many and lords many, but to his worshipper he must be supreme: Me only shalt thou serve. He is a jealous god. He, too, demands of his votary, My son, give me thine heart. To thee I am lord and god; and me thou shalt love with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength. Mammon-worship is an exclusive service; and Mammon-worshippers at large have it brought home to them that they cannot serve God and Mammon. Choose ye this day whom ye will serve. No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. *Huncceine, an hunc, sequeris?*

Mammon, cries the generous heart out of all ages and countries, as interpreted by Mr. Carlyle, is the basest of known gods, even of known devils. "In him what

glory is there, that ye should worship him? No glory discernible; not even terror; at best detestability, ill-matched with despicability." In earlier times, says Hazlitt, before the diffusion of luxury, of knowledge, and other sources of enjoyment had become common, and acted as a diversion to the cravings of avarice, "the passionate admiration, the idolatry, the hunger and thirst of wealth and all its precious symbols, was a kind of madness or hallucination, and Mammon was truly worshipped as a god." He refers to the intense feeling exhibited in Luke's address to his riches, in the *City Madam*; and to the ecstatic raptures of the *Spanish Rogue* in contemplating and hugging his ingots of pure gold and Spanish pieces of eight—rhapsodies which to our present "more refined and tamer apprehensions sound like blasphemy." Shelley finds no improvement in the moderns, no abatement of Mammon-worship in this age of men that make haste to be rich:

"Commerce has set the mark of selfishness,  
The signet of its all-enslaving power,  
Upon a shining ore, and called it gold;  
Before whose image bow the vulgar great, . . .  
And in the temple of their hireling hearts  
Gold is a living god, and rules in scorn  
All earthly things but virtue."

*Inter nos*, he would have said, as Juvenal said of Rome and the Romans in his day, *sanctissima divitiarum Majestas*: since gold's the god we Romans now adore; for though, pernicious gold, no altars flame, nor rise such domes in honour of thy name as Peace, Faith, Valour, Victory, obtain, (to this effect is Juvenal Englished by an old Hand of the sort called Eminent,) "yet thou, more honoured, sharest the purer part, the unfeigned devotion of the votary's heart." Timon of Athens is no such "idle votarist" in his cave: this yellow slave will knit and break religions, says he; and

“What a god’s gold!” he elsewhere exclaims: “to thee be worship!” but not of *his* paying. Our latter-day pamphleteer bids inventive men consider, whether the secret of this universe, and of man’s life there, does, after all, as we rashly fancy it, consist in making money. “There is One God, just, supreme, almighty: but is Mammon the name of Him?—With a Hell which means ‘Failing to make money,’ I do not think there is a Heaven possible that would suit one well; . . . in brief, all this Mammon-Gospel begins to be one of the shabbiest Gospels ever preached; or altogether the shabbiest.” Sauerteig can only hope and believe that when Mammon-worshippers here and there begin to be God-worshippers, a Soul will be felt once more in the “huge-pulsing, elephantine, mechanic Animalism of this Earth,” which will then be a blessed Earth again. “The Dollar cannot rule in Heaven for ever. No; I reckon, not.” In the History of Frederick the Great, again, we come upon the characteristic reflection, “Nuggets and ducats are divine; but they are not the most divine. I often wish the Devil had the lion’s share of them,—at once, and not circuitously as now.” Georges Sand stigmatizes as one of the evils of our day, the rushing of men of vivid imagination into “that terrible resolve, to be rich or to die,”—a sign of the times in “a society so uncertain and troubled as ours, while Europe trembles with fear and hope, between dreams of a fabulous prosperity and of a universal social cataclysm.” Coleridge said long ago, that could we emancipate ourselves from the bedimming influences of custom, and the transforming witchcraft of early association, we should see as numerous tribes of fetish-worshippers in the streets of London and Paris, as we hear of on the coasts of Arabia. He is referring to the sense in which the philosophic Apostle calls covetous-

ness idolatry. Dr. Jacob, whether cynically or ironically, pronounces money to be the end and aim of life: we eat, drink, rise, lie down, to gain money. For that we take up professions, make friends, adopt opinions, hazard our soul's peace, throw away health and youth and all that is best and beautiful under heaven. "Money makes us slaves, sinners, rulers among men, saints in the eyes of the world. Well, the god must be worshipped, since it has been set up." John Newton once said, that if Nebuchadnezzar's image was of solid gold, and every worshipper was to have a bit of it, he feared our nation, as well as the great king's, would be ready to fall down before it.

The men of Abibah are known to have prayed very frequently, and very sincerely, to Koomrah-Kamah, the god of riches,—men who paid very little attention to that rival divinity Kalatarēe (the promoter of illnesses and all disasters): for what are accidents and diseases when put in comparison with the loss or gain of wealth; and who, asks Realmah's historian, would not be rich and diseased rather than poor, healthy, and despised? At least thus thought the Sheviri; but then they were, as some think, poor ignorant barbarians, living at an age of the world when the principles of wisdom had not been fully worked out by mankind.

The futility of a divided service between God and any idol, be the latter named Mammon or what you will, is expressively indicated in Michelet's account of the efforts made in France for the recovery of Charles the Sixth. Vain, he says, were prayers to God for peace and the king's health: prayers stifled by reproaches and curses could not rise to the throne of grace. "But, whilst addressing God, the devil was also tried. Offerings were made to the one, conjurations



addressed to the other. Heaven and hell were implored at one and the same time," and for one and the same purpose.

Best intentions, may be pleaded in apology. But sometimes there is the paradox of the worst intentions. It is written: The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination; how much more when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?

"May one be pardoned, and retain the offence?"

muses guilty Claudius, who would fain, in his own bad sense, make the best of both worlds,—a bad best. He had yet to learn the Psalmist's lesson, "If I incline unto wickedness with mine heart, the Lord will not hear me." He that brings his gift to the altar, and then and there remembers that his brother hath aught against him, must leave there his gift before the altar, and go his way; first be reconciled to his brother, and then come and offer his gift. Cowper's hymn verse is to the purpose,—

"Had I a throne above the rest,  
Where angels and archangels dwell,  
One sin, unslain, within my breast,  
Would make that heaven as dark as hell."

The son of Sirach asks of him that washeth himself after the touching of a dead body, and then touches it again, what availeth his washing? "So is it with a man that fasteth for his sins, and goeth again, and doeth the same: who will hear his prayer? or what doth his humbling profit him?" He is yet in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity whose heart is thus not right in the sight of God; he has neither part nor lot in the matter; for where his treasure is, there will his heart be also, and his treasure is with another than the Most High: he cannot serve both, yet with both he would be on good terms. "This has no hold-

ing," protests Shakspeare's fair Florentine, "to swear by him whom I protest to love, that I will work against him:" the confusion were too palpable. The sanctionious pirate that went to sea with the ten commandments, but scraped one out of the tables—the eighth—had no such scruple. "Why, 'twas a commandment to command the captain and all the rest from their functions; they put forth to steal," as Shakspeare's Lucio and his associates agree. If we say that we have fellowship with Him who is light, and in whom is no darkness at all, and ourselves meanwhile walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. When Pope Hadrian II. consented at last to admit Lothair to the holy communion, he warned him, "But if thou thinkest in thine heart to return to wallow in lust, beware of receiving this sacrament, lest thou provoke the terrible judgment of God." And the king shuddered, but did not draw back. It was avowedly in the prospect of death that the lines of Burns were written,—

"Fain would I say, 'Forgive my foul offence!'

Fain promise never more to disobey;

But should my Maker health again dispense,

Again I might desert fair Virtue's way:

Again in Folly's path might go astray;

Again exalt the brute, and sink the man;

Then how should I for heavenly mercy pray,

Who act so counter heavenly mercy's plan?

Who sin so oft have mourn'd, yet to temptation ran?"

John Ward, the diary-keeping vicar of Stratford-upon-Avon, takes note of one mischievous assertion of the *Papistæ*, as ruinous to any healthy conscience: *asserunt enim posse esse remissionem culpæ, et retentionem culpæ*; that one *may* be pardoned, and retain the offence. The good vicar's maxim is applicable *per contrà*—that *Non tollatur peccatum, nisi restituatur oblatum*. "Hee that entertaines any sinne delightfully," the diarist writes in

another place, "itt leavens alle the whole lump, all his thoughts, desires, affections." We read of the culprit heroine of *Orley Farm*, that she, Lady Mason, had striven to be true and honest—with the exception of that one wrong-doing whereby hangs the tale; but that one misdeed had communicated its poison to her whole life: truth and honesty,—fair, unblemished truth and open-handed, fearless honesty,—had been impossible to her. Before she could be true and honest it would be necessary that she go back and cleanse herself from the poison of that deed. "Will not sin last for ever,—sin such as mine?" "Not if you repent," she is reminded;—"repent and make such restitution as is possible. Lady Mason, say that you have repented. Tell me that you have asked Him to pardon you!" In after days her best friends discuss her career: "How beautiful she was in her sorrow, when we thought that her life had been pure and good!" "And it had been good,—for many years past." "No; for the stolen property was still there." Corinthian converts had it on the best authority, that they could not drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils, could not be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils. John Wesley related from the pulpit how, as a very young man, he had a mind to be upon the stage, but with qualms of conscience to deter him; how he used to ask people, pray, could he be a player, and yet go to the sacrament, and be a Christian. Oh, said they, such a one who was a player went to the sacrament; though, according to the law of the land, no player should receive the sacrament unless he gave proof that he repented. This was Archbishop's Tillotson's doctrine. "Well, then, if that be the case, I will be a player," said young Wesley; and old Wesley, *alter et idem*, adds, "And I thought to act my part for the devil, as well as

anybody ;” and to serve two masters, in spite of the adage.

No sooner had Apæcides been received by the rites of baptism into the bosom of the Church, than the Nazarene, his instructor, hastened to make him conscious of the impossibility of his retaining the office and robes of pagan priesthood. “He could not, it was evident, profess to worship God, and continue even outwardly to honour the idolatrous altars of the fiend.” The heathen king in *Philaster* can recognize as well as the best good Christian the incompatibility of prayer with deliberate unrighteousness :

“—— But how can I  
Look to be heard of gods that must be just,  
Praying upon the ground I hold by wrong ?”

Harley L'Estrange, in the novel, when questioned by Parson Dale whether he has ever felt the efficacy of prayer, owns to having never found it efficacious ; and yet, “so far back as I can remember, it has at least been my habit to pray to Heaven, night and morning, until, at least—until—” “Until you cherished revenge ? You have not dared to pray since ? Oh, reflect what evil there is within us, when we dare not come before Heaven—dare not pray for what we wish !” The rapture of the conscience at sudden release from a guilty thought, may well be pronounced a far nobler bliss than what a Greek poet deemed the highest, the sudden relief of pain ; and not many chapters later in the story we read how, beside the bed where he knelt in boyhood, Harley paused to kneel once more ; for, “the luxury of prayer, interrupted since he had nourished schemes of which his passions had blinded him to the sin, but which, nevertheless, he dared not confess to the All-Merciful, was restored to him.” Hector, returning from the fight, and entreated by his mother to sacrifice to



the gods, avows himself afraid to do so with unwashed hands: so ill beseems it a warrior, besmeared with blood and dirt, to present his supplication to Heaven. "If the leprosy of sin cleaves to thy head," writes an old divine, "God has forbid thee to enter the congregation. If lust lies burning in thy heart, if pride lies swelling in thy bosom, beware and stand off." The state of Balaam's mind, as Bishop Butler interprets and exposes it, was this: he wanted to do what he knew to be very wicked, and he cast about for ways to reconcile this wickedness with his duty; nor is the number inconsiderable of those who thus put half-deceits upon themselves, by means of religious equivocations, subterfuges, and palliating matters to themselves, that so "conscience may be laid asleep, and they may go on in a course of wickedness with less disturbance." Dr. South says of him who, by hypothesis, comes to church with an ill intention, that he comes to God's house upon the devil's errand, and the whole act is thereby rendered evil and detestable before God. The prayers of a wicked man are by Jeremy Taylor likened to "the breath of corrupted lungs: God turns away from such unwholesome breathings." It is of his Cleveland, the pirate, that Scott remarks, that how far soever the guilty may satisfy his own mind, and stupify the feelings of remorse, by such a conditional repentance, we may well question whether it is not, in the sight of Heaven, rather a presumptuous aggravation, than an expiation of his sins. Applicable too is what Sir Walter asks in the case of his Sir Kenneth,—how, while our prayers have in every word admitted the vanity and nothingness of the things of time in comparison with those of eternity, should we hope to deceive the Searcher of Hearts, by giving the rein to worldly passions immediately upon rising from our

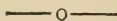
knees? One of the folk-songs of Southern India, translated by Mr. Gover, is a word in season :

“To pray and serve yet not be pure,  
In dirty pot to place good food,  
To worship God while sins endure,  
Can never turn to good.”

The conclusion of one of Crabbe’s posthumous tales may serve for ours—where he pictures a man who

“— mourns his weakness, hopes he shall prevail  
Against his frailty, and yet still is frail.

“Such is his life ! and such the life must be  
Of all who will be bound, yet would be free ;  
Who would unite what God to part decrees—  
The offended conscience and the mind at ease ;  
Who think, but vainly think, to sin and pray,  
And God and Mammon in their turn obey.”



## XLVII.

### CASTING PEARLS BEFORE SWINE.

ST. MATTHEW vii. 6.

E ICHORN and Kuinoel surmise that the word in the Hebrew Gospel represented in the Greek by τὸ ἅγιον, and Englished “that which is holy,” as a thing therefore not to be given away to the dogs, was in reality the same as that which occurs in Exodus xxxii. 2, and signifies an ear-ring. This would make the parallel fitter and closer with the casting of pearls before swine. Other expositors prefer the notion of something which more particularly may be thrown to dogs—say a portion of the flesh of a sanctified victim, and, as such, consecrated, holy. This would be more in the dog’s way, certainly, than jewellery of any description ; but it leaves the pearls for the swine, all the

same ; and pigs are not known to appreciate pearls any more than dogs to delight in ear-rings. To the latter jewels the Orientals are said to have attributed a degree of superstitious sanctity, which may have given rise to the substitution of τὸ ἅγιον in the Greek. At any rate, however, symbolical expressions of a like character are frequent in the New Testament ; and Clemens Alexandrinus supposes them to have been originally so employed by Eastern sages, and thence adopted not only by the Hebrews, but transported into Greece by Pythagoras, who had studied in Egypt,—Homer employing several terms of reproach of the same description.

Pertinently expressive is the proverb of Solomon, that as a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion.

Prospero felt that the jewel of kindness was thrown away on brutish Caliban, whom he had pitied, taken pains to make him speak, taught him each hour one thing or other ; "savage," he finds him and he calls him when all is done, "a thing most brutish,"—

"Abhorrèd slave ;  
Which any print of goodness will not take,  
Being capable of all ill."

When didactic Chesterfield in his very gravest mood impressed upon his son, implicitly rather than explicitly, the duty of piety and affection to himself, of regard and friendship for his clerical tutor, and in short "all the relative duties of man," etc., he complimented the young gentleman by contrast with the fribbles and fast youth of the day : "Such solid arguments would be thrown away upon such shallow puppies. Leave them to their ignorance, and to their dirty disgraceful vices," of which my lord prophesies they will severely feel the effects when too late.

Uncle Clap, in *The Pathfinder*, holds ingratitude to

be the vice of a hog. "Some people say that it is the vice of a king; but I say it is the failing of a hog, for treat the animal to your own dinner, and he would eat you for the dessert."

In the imaginary conversation between Dr. Johnson and Horne Tooke, a remark by the former in disparagement of the critics of his philological companion brings about the reply, "Among these hogs of Westphaly there is not one with a snout that can penetrate into my inclosure, prompt as they are to batten on it and bespatter it, and to trample it down as they grunt and trot along." Johnson's head and body keep admirable time to the other's words—for he likes the period, as if it might be his own. It was in reference to the arguments prepared by Johnson at Boswell's instance for a complex case before the Scottish lords of session, that one of these latter deprecated the pains taken as labour lost—"for, indeed, it is casting pearls before swine." Wilberforce said of Burke, that, like the fabled object of the fairy's favours, "whenever he opened his mouth pearls and diamonds dropped from him;" but the neglect of the House was unpleasantly suggestive of an unsavoury comparison. As Goldsmith put it,

"In short, 'twas his fate, unemploy'd or in place, sir,  
To eat mutton cold, and cut blocks with a razor."

Which last trenchant figure of speech reminds us of Balzac's saying, as to revealing certain truths to certain minds, or what the owners are pleased to call their minds,—*c'est laisser des rasoirs sous la main d'un singe*.

Hartley Coleridge affirms nothing to be rasher, nothing more futile and profitless, than the attempt to teach those, whatever their age may be, over whom you have no natural or constituted authority, who do not themselves acknowledge their need of instruction. If the matter, indeed, be one that admits of a point-



blank appeal to the conscience—if it concern the eternal interests of the soul, Duty may demand the experiment, “and Grace may cause it to succeed, in spite of all moral incapacities and repugnance. Yet even in these cases, the blessed Saviour Himself has cautioned us not to throw pearls before swine.” To apply the lines of Corneille’s *Polyeucte* :—

“ Mais que sert de parler de ces trésors cachés  
A des esprits que Dieu n’a pas encor touchés ? ”

Some are not capable of receiving rational answers, especially in divine things, Samuel Taylor Coleridge asserts in the *Aids to Reflection*: “they were not only lost upon them, but religion dishonoured by the contest.” It is written in the Book of Proverbs, that whoso reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame, and he that rebuketh a wicked man getteth himself a blot. “Speak not in the ears of a fool; for he will despise the wisdom of thy words.” So again with immature faculties. Babies of a span long can as well digest the strongest of strong meat, as pigs can pearls.

One of the two sonnets indited by Milton on the detraction which followed upon his writing certain treatises, begins,—

“ I did but prompt the age to quit their clogs  
By the known rules of ancient liberty,  
When straight a barbarous noise environs me  
Of owls and cuckoos, asses, apes, and dogs . . .  
But this is got by casting pearls to hogs.”

That anonymous “proletarian diplomatist” who, having to attend the Peace Congress at Geneva, considered it a suitable opportunity to read a paper recommending the whole civilized world to go to war with Russia, and to whom therefore the assembled pacificators refused to listen, published his pamphlet (1867) under the vindictive title of “My Pearl,” *Meine Perle vor dem Genfer*

*Congress*, with what was decreed an obvious innuendo at the expense of the inappreciative audience—if audience that may be called which audience refused. One can fancy the foiled orator's eyes in a fine frenzy rolling, like those of the Black Dwarf when repudiating the "slavish and bestial doctrine" propounded by Earnscliff, and putting an end to the conference in this style: "I spurn at it, as worthy only of the beasts that perish; but I will waste no more words with you." This species of impatient contempt it is that has found consistent supporters of the rule of reserve in doctrinal mysteries. Many, approving of a hard-and-fast line of demarcation between exoteric and esoteric, like to have strong meat kept apart for themselves, and for a few of the hardy stomachs they deem fit for such food, but they would have the babes "stick to their milk." Even Pythagoras, as Mr. Lewes says, earnest thinker as he was, could not be made to believe in the fitness of the multitude for truth; he had two sorts of doctrine to teach—one, believed by him to be the truth, for a few disciples, whom he chose with extreme caution; the other, for those who pleased to listen, was what he thought the masses were fitted to receive. Marcus Tullius, in the imaginary dialogue with Quinctus Cicero, obviates an objection by the latter to his talking as if there were a plurality of gods, by professing to speak as those around him, and employing in these matters the language of his country. "Italy is not so fertile in hemlock as Greece; yet a wise man will dissemble half his wisdom on such a topic; and I, adopting the means of dialogue, have often delivered my opinions in the voice of others, and speak now as custom, not as reason leads me." Shaftesbury contends that we can never do more injury to truth, than by discovering too much of it, on some occasions,—it being the same with understandings as with eyes:

to such a certain size and make just so much light is necessary, and no more : whatever is beyond, brings darkness and confusion. "'Tis real humanity and kindness to hide strong truths from tender eyes." "It may be necessary, as well now as heretofore, for wise men to speak in parables, and with a double meaning, that they only who have ears to hear, may hear." Sister Opis cries to Sister Arge in the mystico-metrical adaptation from Herodotus by a modern minstrel :—

"Show not ! show not ! let men know not  
 What is coming. For the mind of the world is undefined ;  
 And the dark not yet the day-star doth release.  
 Wherefore watch ye well, and ward, sister, hold ye fast, and guard  
 The sacred straw from bruise or flaw,  
 And the mystic veil from soil or crease."

The nakedness of truth, urges a Roman ecclesiastic, should never be too openly exposed to the eyes of the vulgar ; and wisely, to his thinking, was it feigned by the ancients, that Truth lay concealed in a well.

Anglican divines account it an honoured custom with all the sober and wise nations of the world, to reserve the great rites of their religion *in occulto*. The Egyptians, for instance, "those great masters of all learning," how studiously they locked up their sacred things from all access and knowledge of the vulgar ; and by the system of hereditary priesthood, confined the knowledge of their sacerdotal mysteries to a caste. The Phœnicians, too, the Babylonians, and the Grecians, had they not their *ιερά γράμματα*, and their *ιδίους χαρακτήρας*, their sacred and peculiar way of writing, whereby to rescue "the reverend mysteries of their religion from the rude inspection of the rout" ? The Romans had their formulary of forbiddal, *Procul este profani* ; and in the Jewish Church "the people were not suffered to enter into the holy of holies, nor to pry or look into the ark,

no, nor so much as to touch it ; and all this by the particular, express prohibition of God Himself." Montaigne emphatically approves the Church's interdiction of "the promiscuous, indiscreet, and irreverent use of the holy and divine Psalms ;" for we ought not, he urges, to mix God in our actions but with the highest reverence and caution ; and he accounts it the reverse of decent "to see the Holy Bible, the rule of our worship and belief, tumbled up and down a hall or a kitchen. They were formerly mysteries, but are now become sports and recreations. . . . The reading of the Scriptures ought to be a temperate and premeditated act, and to which men should always add this devout preface, *sursum corda*, preparing even the body to so humble and composed a gesture and countenance as shall evidence their veneration and attention." Neither is it, he insists, a book fit for every one to handle, but the study of select men set apart for that purpose : "the wicked and ignorant blemish it. 'Tis not a story to tell, but a history to reverence, fear, and adore." Fontenelle, a feebler and colder-blooded Montaigne, said he might have his hand full of truth, and open only his little finger. He was scarcely the sort of man to appreciate the argument, so useful for theologians to keep in mind, that religious truth is valuable in proportion as it finds a place in the hearts of ordinary men.

And ordinary men are not swine—unless indeed to those who take up the *odi* and *arceo* verbs of scorn for the *profanum pecus*. Yet do pig-headed people abound. Upon how many is argument, for instance, purely wasted, and remonstrant reasoning clean thrown away. Your best pearls in such cases go but the way of the trough. Either the brains, or the will, or both, are too porcine for that kind of pabulum. There are people who are evidence-proof: statistics fly off from them



"like shot off a duck's back ;" and the more argument seems to triumph against them, the more profoundly convinced they become of the truth of their own position. Hobbes said that when men have once acquiesced in untrue opinions, and registered them as authenticated records in their minds, it is no less impossible to speak intelligibly to such men than to write legibly on a paper already scribbled over. *Verba fiunt mortuo*, you are talking to one who will not heed you. Molière's Arnolphe is typical when he protests,

"Prêchez, patrocinez, jusqu'à la Pentecôte ;  
Vous serez ébahi, quand vous serez au bout,  
Que vous ne m'en aurez rien persuadé du tout."

So, in his way, another way, is Alceste :—

"Je sais que vous parlez, monsieur, le mieux du monde ;  
En beaux raisonnements vous abondez toujours ;  
Mais vous perdez le temps, et tous vos beaux discours."

And so, yet again, in quite another, is Orgon :—

"Mon frère, vos conseils sont les meilleurs du monde ;  
Ils sont bien raisonnés, et j'en fais un grand cas :  
Mais vous trouverez bon que je n'en use pas."

Locke describes, with a touch of humour, from observation, and from experience of the trouble they gave him, a set of men whose discourses being seldom in the right, they are as seldom to be convinced they are in the wrong ; "it being all one to go about to draw those men out of their mistakes, who have no settled notions, as to dispossess a vagrant of his habitation who has no settled abode." You may as well

"Forbid the sea for to obey the moon,  
As . . . shake the fabric of his folly."

Rashleigh Osbaldistone tells his cousin Frank, "There is neither wisdom nor profit in disputing with such a mind as Sir Hildebrand's, which hardens itself against conviction, and believes in its own inspirations as firmly

as we good Catholics do in those of the Holy Father of Rome." "It seems to me, Anselmo," says Lothario, in Cervantes' novelet, "that it is with you as it always is with the Moors, who never can be convinced of the error of their sect by the evidence of Holy Scripture, nor by arguments drawn from reason. . . . So hopeless is the task of contending by argument against such preposterous folly." De Quincey declares, that to some people the only appropriate style of reasoning is by kicking them; *à posteriori* arguments are alone intelligible to their perverse senses. There are persons, said Archbishop Whately, whom to attempt to convince by even the strongest reasons and most cogent arguments, is like King Lear putting a letter before a man without eyes, and saying, "Mark but the penning of it!" to which he answers, "Were all the letters suns, I could not see one." A scientific writer exposes the error of scientific men in being ready to think that the monomaniac who can square the circle can be set right by a scientific demonstration of his error—there being on record one, and one only, instance of the conversion of a circle-squarer, which was as far back as the beginning of the seventeenth century, and the quadrator thus converted to sanity a Jesuit. We read of an agricultural labourer who squared the circle, and sent the papers to Mr. De Morgan,\* who returned them with a note to the effect that his correspondent had not the knowledge requisite to see in what the problem consisted; and the Professor got for answer a letter in which he was told that a person who could not see that he had done the thing should change his business, and turn his attention to a Sunday school to learn what he could, and keep "the little children from durting their close."

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\* *A Budget of Paradoxes.* By Augustus De Morgan, F.R.A.S.

Sir Henry Holland includes among his "Recollections" the friendship he formed at Milan with one of the Directors of the Ambrosian Library, Amoretti, the author of a work, *Sulla Raddomanzia*—the "science," as he insisted on calling it, of the Divining Rod; the whole mind of this good old man being engrossed with that one subject, to his belief in which he sedulously sought to bring over his English friend. The latter speaks of Amoretti's experiments as carrying sources of fallacy on the very face of them; but adds, that "his gentle and earnest simplicity forbade any exposure of these self-deceptions. There are many cases in life when to convince, even of error, is a breach of the charity we owe to one another." That is a suave and soothing version of the plain truth, that upon some folks argument is simply thrown away.

What the Manchester man said of Archdeacon Denison is often quoted, "One might as well go about to confute a bull." A Papal bull for instance. One of Coleridge's essays on his own times begins with the reflection, that of the many afflicting truths, to the evidence of which even the kindest natures must gradually constrain their conviction, this is the last and most reluctantly admitted, that there are men and classes of men whom *no* truth can convince, whom *no* evidence can convert from their errors. Professor Spalding refers to prejudices and prepossessions on which arguments can take no hold, but which are often displaced by other notions suggested without argument; just as, in a siege, the shot and shell rebound without effect from the masonry of a casemated bastion, which a storming party, if they can once enter the trenches, will carry at the first assault. Theodore Hook describes the head of one of his country squires as being as firm as the wall of a fives' court, and the harder you hit him with a hint the stronger it came

back to you, without having made the slightest impression. As with hints, so with arguments. And the professor's remark about minds upon which arguments can "take no hold," reminds us of George Eliot's description of Mr. Tulliver. Certain seeds which are required to find a nidus for themselves under unfavourable circumstances, have been supplied by nature with an apparatus of hooks, so that they will get a hold on very unreceptive surfaces. "The spiritual seed which had been scattered over Mr. Tulliver had apparently been destitute of any corresponding provision, and had slipped off to the winds again, from a total absence of hooks." But the fault lies mostly with the unreceptive surface. Arguing against a fool may well be deemed the most hopeless of all operations—it being as hard to confute him to his own satisfaction as to catch water in a sieve, or make a rope of sand. *On a beau réfuter ses vains raisonnements.* Now and then, it is true, says a Saturday Reviewer, one meets a fool so hollow and so pretentious that it is impossible to resist the temptation of having a throw with him; but even in such a case as this, the execution ought to be swift and certain. If you can impose absolute silence on your fool, the Reviewer thinks it may be worth while to spend a little time and trouble in despatching him; but "if he be one of those lively fools who can skip to and fro with the celerity and heartiness of that ignoble but tormenting insect which can leap a hundred times the length of its own body, who is no sooner expelled from one corner than he has entrenched himself in another, then it is much the better plan to leave him to disport at his ease." The Socratic power of driving an antagonist into a corner is supposed to be either lost in these days, or perhaps to have only existed formerly on condition of one man's supplying the answers as well as the questions. "Haud thy tongue,



woman, haud thy tongue," is the laird's finisher in Galt's best story: "It's a thrashing o' the water, and a raisin' o' bells, to speak to ane o' thy capacity on things so far aboon thy understanding." And therefore Grippy bids Girzy "gae butt the house, and see gin the supper's ready," as something a little more in her way and within her means. Compare the style of Benvenuto Cellini with the Lombard captain at the gate of Prato, "a robust, lusty man, who spoke in a very rough, brutish manner, and was exceeding ignorant and presumptuous. . . . This stupid mortal now shook his head, now turned himself one way and now another . . . uttered oaths and imprecations, and told me he did not understand this puzzling affair of mine. Being at last tired of the fool, I desired him to leave it to me, who *did* understand it." John Wesley in middle age professed to have a thousand times found his father's words true: "You may have peace with the Dissenters if you do not dispute with them. But if you do, they will 'out-fact' and 'out-lung' you; and, at the end, you will be where you were at the beginning." Shirley's Dean agrees with regard to some "really admirable people" who fancy that free inquiry on any "shelved" topic is pernicious, that they are never to be argued with, if you can help it, but simply to be avoided; argument "only renders their hostility more bitter." The alienation of the understanding he deems more hopeless than the alienation of the heart. A more famous Dean, he of St. Patrick's, declared in the Drupier's letters that there were three sorts of persons with whom he was resolved never to dispute—a highwayman with a pistol at his breast, a troop of dragoons who came to plunder his house, and a man of the law who can make a merit of accusing him: in each of these cases, "which are almost the same," the best method is to keep out of the way.

Even so Byron, when Leigh Hunt defended his poetical style, as written "upon system," said no more: for, "when a man talks of system, his case is hopeless." And in much the same spirit a Saturday Reviewer said of a distinguished Oxford Professor, "It is an act of condescension to argue at all with a man who can only write in a scream." Quite a different sort of controversialist it was that provoked the remark from the same quarter, how useless it is to attempt to talk a man into a belief in truth, or principle, or honour, who frankly avows that he regards them as elegant superfluities. "It would be about as hopeful a task to argue a Scotch political economist into poetry or love." It is no use discussing the flavour of grapes with an Esquimaux, or disputing with a native of Timbuctoo on the properties of ice. Mrs. Oliphant somewhere gives utterance to the exclamation, that surely of all incomprehensible entities, the most amazing is a fool—a creature insensate, unreasoning, upon whom neither argument nor fact can make any impression. Not much better appears King George the Third to have been in the estimate of our great Whig historian, when discussing the coronation oath: "To argue with him was impossible. Dundas tried to explain the matter, but was told to keep his Scotch metaphysics to himself." Chesterfield observes, in one of his miscellaneous pieces, that a difference in opinion, though in the merest trifles (not that the coronation oath was one), alienates little minds, especially of high rank; and of such he adds, finished courtier and man of the world as he was, that it is impossible to inform, but very easy to displease them. *His* pearls he kept for other purposes and other persons. He had no fancy for seeing his pearls trampled upon; still less for being himself, as the sequel, turned upon, and rent, or rended.

## XLVIII.

### AN EYE WITH A BEAM, AND AN EYE FOR A MOTE.

ST. LUKE vi. 41, 42.\*

THE diction of proverbs is often purposely extravagant, and affects a sort of converse *reductio ad absurdum*, substituting for reduction a rule of addition or multiplication on a monstrous scale. A beam of wood in the eye of a man, is nearly as fantastic a supposition as a camel threading his way through that of a needle. But the big beam of wood does excellent service by way of contrast to the little mote,—or, as it might be rendered, splinter,—a rendering analogous to the previous figure of speech; a bulky plank, or rafter, or beam, in the one clause of the proverb, and a mere splinter of the same wood in the second.

A beam, plank, or rafter in the eye, were that possible,—and in proverbs all things are possible,—is not calculated to improve the eyesight. The bulk of it is an objection; to see at all, the eye must see over it, across it, or round some corner of it, how it may; for the opaque density of such a cubic mass of matter is decidedly against it as a transparent medium. He must be clairvoyant indeed to whom such a medium were serviceable. Nevertheless, there are people who, by hypothesis, in the proverb, are able to see through it, if not see all the better for it. All laws of optics notwithstanding, they see through the massive beam in their own eye, and in spite of it, if not indeed by means of it, detect, discern, demon-

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\* For a previous chapter of illustrations of the corresponding passage in St. Matthew, see pp. 187-191 of the First Series of *Secular Annotations on Scripture Texts*.

strate, and denounce the tiny splinter that lurks in the eye of a brother. The beam acts as a magnifying glass, and the splinter is magnified accordingly. They see through that glass darkly ; but the darkness is not to them a darkness that may be felt. The light that is in them is darkness, and how great is that darkness ! Yet to themselves they seem to revel in the brightest of daylight, while their brother gropes among the shadows of night. They are fain to help the poor creature. They would like to operate forthwith upon that inflamed eye of his, and pluck out the irritating splinter. Nowhere perhaps is there a keener eye for a splinter than an eye with a plank in it. The eye with a beam within is the very eye for a mote without. It can see clearly to cast it out at a moment's notice, and dearly it longs to do so ; for the beam cannot abide the mote ; the splinter is an eyesore to the plank.

It takes a long time to learn by heart so as to take to heart Archbishop Whately's maxim, or *pensée*, that ten thousand of the greatest faults in our neighbours, are of less consequence to *us* than one of the smallest in ourselves. Elsewhere he says, "Never is the mind less fitted for self-examination, than when most occupied in detecting the faults of others." Have you never, asks Ellesmere, found the critic disclose four errors on his own part for one that he delights to point out in the sayings or doings of the person he criticizes ? Shakspeare's Biron claims the right to ask his companions, noble and royal alike, Dumain, Longueville, and the king of Navarre, addressing them singly and collectively,—

"But are you not ashamed ? nay, are you not,  
All three of you, to be thus much o'ershot ?  
You found his mote ; the king your mote did see ;  
But I a beam do find in each of three."

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Who, exclaims Juvenal, can stand hearing the Gracchi complaining of sedition? *Quis tulerit Gracchos de seditione querentes?* Even Benvolio is thus taken to task by Mercutio: "What eye, but such an eye, would spy out such a quarrel? Thy head is as full of quarrels as an egg is full of meat; and yet thy head hath been beaten as addle as an egg, for quarrelling." The raven chides blackness, quoth Ulysses, in Troilus and Cressida; and "He'll be physician that should be the patient," Agamemnon adds. This is all in ridicule of Ajax, who protests, "I do hate a proud man, as I hate the engendering of toads," and yet he loves himself, is the *aside* of Ulysses; is it not strange? When Gloster tells King Henry, "Thy son I killed for his presumption," the retort is obvious: "Hadst thou been killed when first thou didst presume, thou hadst not lived to kill a son of mine." *Clodius accusat mæchos*, the proverb has it: an equivalent in terms to, The devil rebukes sin. An accuser should always, as Plautus puts it, enter an appearance with clean hands: "*Qui alterum incusat probri cum ipsum se intueri oportet.*" The glass-house tenant should be shy of stone-throwing. When the archbishop, in Landor's *Siege of Ancona*, has his fling at the consul in the words, "Thus we teach the proud their duty," the consul rejoins,

"—— Let the lame man teach the lame

To walk, the blind man teach the blind to see."

Plutarch observes of the letters full of bitterest invective which passed between Otho and Vitellius, that well-grounded though their mutual reproaches might be, and indeed were, it was absurd for the one to insult the other with what might with equal justice be objected to both; for their charges were of prodigality, effeminacy, incapacity for war, previous poverty and unbounded indebtedness—points wherein it were hard to say which of

them had the advantage. The pot called the kettle black, and the kettle had a *tu quoque* right of reply. Gibbon says of the chagan of the Avars, Baian, who affected to complain of the insincerity of the Greeks, that this barbarian prince was at least a match for the most civilized nations in the refinement of dissimulation and perfidy. Philip the Fair denouncing the cruelties and tyranny of the Inquisition, and issuing his ordinance against an Office that tortured into false admissions of guilt, and suborned false witnesses where confession of guilt was not to be extorted by torture, is an edifying study,—remembering that Philip was the king who so cruelly seized and tortured the Templars. “Of lawless force shall lawless Mars complain?” is the upbraiding query of Homer’s indignant Jove.

Bolingbroke inveighed against corrupt assailants of political corruption, as men that “must have fronts of brass, and deserve all the indignation that is due to iniquity, aggravated by impudence.” Montague, accused in 1698 of peculation and greed, had the right of retort, that how his largesses had been bestowed none knew better than some of the austere patriots who harangued so loudly against his avidity. The profligate Duke of Wharton’s declamation on public virtue, in 1721, is well said by Earl Stanhope—whose ancestor and namesake by title died of that speech, or at least of the excitement of his own in answering it—to have come a little strangely from the President of the Hell-fire Club. Neither patricians nor plebeians were to be taught morality by that young sprig of ignoble nobility. Wresting a couplet of Dryden’s to the purpose, it might be said of him and of them,

“Yet they refused (nor could he take offence)  
His glutton kind should teach them abstinence.”

Stormy was the laughter in the House when John

Hampden,—not merely the grandson of the great leader of the Long Parliament, but himself a man who boasted of having conspired with Algernon Sidney against the royal family,—used the word republican (as against Halifax) as a term of reproach. Swift has a tale within a Tale (of a Tub) of a fat unwieldy fellow, half stifled in the press of a throng which a mountebank in Leicester Fields had drawn about him, and crying out against the filthy crowd, protesting against the squeezing of the rabble rout, denouncing elbow-thrusts in particular and the foul air in general; till at last a weaver, that stood next the overgrown grumbler, could hold no longer, but “confounded” him as the biggest offender of them all: Who else helped to make up the crowd half so much as his corpulent self? Couldn't he see that he took up more room with that huge carcase of his than any five other men? Was he the man to vituperate until he brought his own corporation within reasonable compass? The Dean's faithful version of the weaver's racy diction is a trifle too coarse for literal transcription. Nor, perhaps, is every phrase presentable in his apostrophe to beam-eyed lady-censors who assail their own sex with such *acharnement*:

“ Say, foolish females, bold and blind,  
 Say, by what fatal turn of mind  
 Are you on vices most severe  
 Wherein you have the greatest share?  
 Thus every fool herself deludes;  
 The prudes condemn the absent prudes; . . .  
 While crooked Cynthia sneering says  
 That Florimel wears iron stays;  
 Chloe, of every coxcomb jealous,  
 Admires how girls can talk with fellows;  
 And, full of indignation, frets  
 That women should be such coquettes: . . .  
 And Rufa, with her combs of lead,  
 Whispers that Sappho's hair is red:

Aura, whose tongue you hear a mile hence,  
Talks half a day in praise of silence ;  
And Sylvia, full of inward guilt,  
Calls Amoret an arrant jilt."

Fénelon *spirituellement* says that "c'est par imperfection qu'on reprend les imparfaits. C'est un amour-propre subtil et pénétrant qui ne pardonne rien à l'amour-propre d'autrui. Plus il est amour-propre, plus il est sévère censeur. . . . Les passions d'autrui paraissent infiniment ridicules et insupportables à quiconque est livré aux siennes." Delicate as Fénelon was, such passages as this show how easy it would have been for him, as Sainte-Beuve says, to be *malin* and *satirique*.

For Milton to complain of "evil tongues," in Johnson's opinion, required impudence at least equal to his other powers ; "Milton, whose warmest advocates must allow that he never spared any asperity of reproach or brutality of insolence." But, as in Prior's *Alma*,

"I find, quoth Mat, reproof is vain :  
Who first offend will first complain."

Macaulay taxes Johnson, who so frequently blamed Shakspeare for neglecting the proprieties of time and place, and for ascribing to one age or nation the manners and opinions of another, with sinning quite as grievously in the same way, in the story of *Rasselas*. Horace Walpole finds it diverting to hear Lord Melcombe (Bubb Dodington) rail in his *Diary* at Lord Halifax and others, for the very kind of double-dealing which he relates coolly of himself in the next page ; and alleges, that had he gone backwards, he might have given half-a-dozen volumes of his own life, with similar anecdotes and variations.

Not in Pope's *Dunciad* only, but out of it, far and wide,



“Kind Self-conceit to some her glass applies,  
Which no one looks in with another’s eyes.”

It is as with Whiffle in Churchill—the contrast between what he was in his own sight and what in that of the world: a little lower than the human,

“Such Whiffle came, and such was seen  
In the world’s eye; but (strange to tell!)  
Misled by Fancy’s magic spell,  
Was more than human in his own.”

My Lady Dowager, in *Esmond*, when commenting on the alleged disfigurement of young Lady Castlewood’s face, from small-pox, “turned to her looking-glass and examined her own old wrinkled countenance in it with such a grin of satisfaction, that it was all her guests could do to refrain from laughing in her ancient face.” When Goldsmith’s *Bee* essayist, avowedly aged sixty-two, saunters into the Park with Cousin Hannah, four years his elder, their antiquated figures soon attract the eyes of the company,—the politer part smiling, and “the vulgar” bursting into a horse-laugh at their grotesque appearance. Cousin Hannah, being perfectly assured of the point-device propriety of her own make-up, attributes all this mirth to the oddity of her companion’s look, while he as cordially places the whole to her account. Cuthbert Gurney’s zest in laughing at the ridiculous things told him of his acquaintance by a tattling doctor, incites his brother to remind him that probably “*we*,” in our turns, with all our little foibles and failings, mental and bodily, become equally subjects of amusement for everybody else in the neighbourhood.” “Ah, well,” says Cuthbert, “there is something in *that*, to be sure, that never struck me before: but what have we about *us* that can be laughed at?” Mr. Windham, after examining Warren Hastings for some time, at the trial, told Fanny Burney he did not at all like his face;

and Miss was more than a little tickled by the fact that the two statesmen were reckoned extremely like one another. Queen Caroline's enumeration of certain physical defects which ought to have rendered impossible the liaison between Sir Robert Walpole and Miss Skerrett, and which culminated in the compassionate reflection, "Ah, what is human nature!" moved Lord Hervey to note down that "while she was saying this, she little reflected in what degree she herself possessed all the impediments and antidotes to love she had been enumerating, and that 'Ah, what is human nature!' was as applicable to her own blindness." Henri Beyle (De Stendhal) somewhere declares *c'est une leçon*, the way in which the ugliest clumsiest people will contrive *se faire illusion* of their figure and face: even cultivated folks who study fine portraits manage to effect a total abstraction of all defects in the face before them, when they are tying on their cravat or brushing their hair.

"O wad some pow'r the giftie gie us  
To see oursels as ithers see us!"

For that, presumably, would from many a blunder free us, and foolish notion. Strange it is, muses Sir Thomas Browne, that in the most perfect sense there should be so many fallacies; but the greatest imperfection is in our inward sight, "that is, to be ghosts unto our own eyes; and while we are so sharp-sighted as to look through others, to be invisible unto ourselves; for the inward eyes are more fallacious than the outward." The vices we scoff at in others, he goes on to say, laugh at us within ourselves: avarice, pride, falsehood, lie undiscovered and blindly in us, even to the age of blindness; and therefore, to see ourselves interiorly, we are fain to borrow other men's eyes; wherein true friends are good informers, and censors

no bad friends. La Fontaine is as good to point a moral as to adorn a tale, or a fable :

"Lynx envers nos pareils, et taupes envers nous,  
Nous nous pardonnons tout, et rien aux autres hommes :  
On se voit d'un autre œil qu'on ne voit son prochain."

Adam Smith calls this self-deceit, this fatal weakness of mankind, the source of half the disorders of human life. "If we saw ourselves in the light in which others see us, or in which they would see us if they knew all, a reformation would generally be unavoidable. We could not otherwise endure the sight." But thus may we see how the world wags, wags on in the old way :

"Crimina qui cernunt aliorum, non sua cernunt,  
Hi sapiunt aliis, desipiuntque sibi."

Too many, says Archbishop Leighton, take the ready course to deceive themselves ; for they look with both eyes on the failings and defects of others, and scarcely give their good qualities half an eye, while, on the contrary, in themselves, they study to the full their own merits, and their weaknesses and defects they skip over, as children do their hard words in a lesson : "making this uneven parallel, what wonder if the result be a gross mistake of themselves !" Cowper brings the like charge, in well-sounding verse :

"Their own defects, invisible to them,  
Seen in another, they at once condemn ;  
And though self-idolized in every case,  
Hate their own likeness in a brother's face."

The humorist in the Spectator brings together at dinner half-a-dozen of his friends who are each of them notorious for inserting redundant phrases in their discourse ; and each of the guests making frequent use of his pet expletive, his "D'ye hear me," "D'ye see," "And so, sir," etc., he appears so ridiculous to his neighbours, that each comes to reflect upon himself as

appearing equally ridiculous to the rest of the company. The reason assigned for Swift's Yahoos hating one another more than they did any different species of animals, is, the odiousness of their own shapes, which all could see in the rest, but not in themselves. At the conclusion of his *Scheme to make an Hospital for Incurables*, the Dean owns himself happy in the reflection, that although in that short treatise the characters of many thousands are contained among the vast variety of incurables, yet not any one person is likely to be offended; because it is natural to apply ridiculous characters to all the world except ourselves. And he is bold to affirm, that the most incurable fool, knave, scold, coxcomb, scribbler, or liar, in the whole nation, will sooner enumerate the circle of their acquaintance as addicted to those distempers than once imagine themselves any way qualified for such an hospital. A later Swift proposes thanksgiving to God for imparting to us poor weak mortals the inestimable blessing of vanity—upon which food, and scarcely any other, so many half-witted votaries of the arts, for instance, on his showing, subsist; for, if the delusion were to drop from their eyes, and they should see themselves as they are, what could they do but just walk off Waterloo Bridge, and there an end?

An essayist on Folly surmises, that if required to name one unfailing characteristic of a fool, he should incline to name the want of power to see himself and his doings reflected in the mind of others. Confessedly it is given to none to know with absolute correctness how we stand in the thoughts of others; but in the case of the foolish body there is an utter gulf between his idea of himself and the consent of mankind concerning him. And defending mankind from the indiscriminate charge by mere satirists of pervading folly, because



they are occasionally foolish, the essayist submits as a proper test, Do they ever wake to a consciousness of having played the fool? For, no man, he contends, who is ever thoroughly, deeply, heart and soul, ashamed of himself, who comes to a sense of the true nature of his own folly, and sees it with other men's eyes, should be classed among the irreclaimable. The real fool is defined to be he who never regrets the right thing or for the right reason, and under no circumstances sees himself as others see him.

Mr. Windham, in his *Adversaria*, vents a thousand pities on the impossibility of a man's, for a while, standing at a distance from himself, and inspecting his own person, manner, behaviour, and character, with the eye of a stranger. "What a pity that no one can see himself as he is seen by every one else!" It is from this impossibility that one meets people every day who are as perfect strangers to their own characters as a man would be to his own countenance who had never seen the reflection of it in a mirror. In this latter predicament, as the reflective statesman phrases it, "few can be found; art, incited by vanity, having furnished us with such ready means of viewing our own persons. But there is no mirror that can, at one view, give us a distinct image of our characters." Even if there were, might not the result too often be that of the fast-fading impression in St. James's similitude,—the case of a man beholding his natural face in a glass, who, going his way, straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was? The desiderated image of character is only to be formed, by our statesman's reckoning, like the map of some of the planets, from the result of observations made with pain and difficulty, and at various times;—for which reason few people ever form it at all, but remain in such total ignorance of the appearance of

their own characters, as seen from without, that nothing is more common than to hear a man arraigning in others the very faults for which he is himself most notorious, and treating his own favourite follies, the very vices of his own bosom, with as much severity as if he had not the remotest kinship with them. "You talk of pride!" Menenius Agrippa exclaims, addressing the pair of tribunes who so stir his patrician bile: "Oh that you could turn your eyes towards the napes of your necks, and make but an interior survey of your good selves! Oh that you could!"

"*Brutus.* What then, sir.

*Menen.* Why, then you should discover a brace of unmeriting, proud, violent, testy magistrates, (alias, fools,) as any in Rome."

Menenius had asked them before in what enormity was his favourite Marcius poor that they twain, Brutus and Sicinius, had not in abundance; and Brutus had pronounced Caius Marcius to be poor in no one fault, but stored with all. "Especially in pride," quoth Sicinius; "and topping all others in boasting," adds his colleague; thus provoking Menenius to the retort, "This is strange now: Do you two know how you are censured here in the city," in respect of pride and boasting? And then follows his plain-spoken invective against them as a brace of stuck-up asses, for whom his one wish was that they could but once, and once for all, see themselves as others saw them. Baltimore, in the comedy of *The Election*, provokes his more sensible wife to laughter by his vehement onset against the detested Freeman, especially declaring the very gait and shape of his legs to be insufferable: "People, you must know, have taken it into their heads that there is a resemblance between you and him. I have myself, in twilight, sometimes mistaken the one for the other."

Rather in midnight, the angry man suggests: people must be blind idiots: he could kick his own shins if he thought they had the smallest resemblance to that fellow's.

Not only as critic but as patriot was Jean Paul Richter for returning thanks to Madame de Staël in his review of her book on Germany; for it is not the outward man, said he, but the inward, that needs mirrors, and we cannot wholly see ourselves, except in the eye of a foreign seer. The reviewer asserted how happy he would be to see and enter a picture-gallery, or hall of mirrors, and see his countrymen's faces limned by quite different nations,—“where we might learn how differently we look to eyes that were different.”

When John Riley, who, diffident and unassuming as he was, stepped into Sir Peter Lely's place, and secured Sir Peter's patrons, upon the death of that well-patronized painter, he was introduced to Charles the Second, and commissioned to paint his majesty's portrait; on seeing which, the Merry Monarch with frank good-nature exclaimed, “Is that like me? Then, od's-fish, it's an ugly-looking fellow I am!” Right royal is this superiority to the narrow vision typified in La Bruyère's elderly coquette, who studies her past-forty face in the glass, and while she lays on the rouge and the mouches and the powder, talks away against the silly bodies *de quarante ans* who affect to be still juvenile, and protests that positively Clarice is ridiculous, too ridiculous, *avec ses mouches et son rouge*. We mortals sometimes cut a pitiable figure in our attempts at display, muses the observant author of *Middlemarch*: we may be sure of our own merits, yet fatally ignorant of the point of view from which we are regarded by our neighbours. “Our fine patterns in tattooing may be far from throwing him into a swoon of admiration, though we turn

ourselves all round to show them." And the same shrewdly sagacious student of character asks, in another work, what mortal is there of us all, who would find his satisfaction enhanced by an opportunity of comparing the picture he presents to himself of his own doings, with the picture they make on the mental retina of his neighbours? We see nothing behind us, Montaigne says: we mock ourselves a hundred times a day, when we deride our neighbour, and detest in others the defects which are more manifest in us, and wonder at them with "a marvellous unconsciousness and impudence." "Oh, the heavens!" is *Violenzia's* exclamation to the King, in *Roscoe's* tragedy,—

"How basely dare men write themselves; would you  
Might hear another speak as you do now,  
You would condemn him for the most debased  
That ever yet left blushing."

It is, indeed, characteristic of Leigh Hunt to demur to the presumed advantage of seeing ourselves as others see us; and very like him to ask who would wish to have deprived the uncouth old Scotch pedagogue of that burst of extravagant self-complacency with which he turned Roderick Random round and round, surveying him from head to foot with such infinite surprise and inextinguishable laughter, and breaking into gestures and exclamations supremely oafish and absurd. When our follies afford equal delight to ourselves and those about us, argues this kindly sophist, what is there to be desired more? It is better, he submits, to have a contempt for any one than for ourselves. His philosophy would, in this mood, have refrained from urging the appeal of the Queen to Constance in Mr. Browning's dramatic fragment:

"Dear, make me see it. Do you see it so?  
None see themselves—another sees them best."



## XLIX.

### ONE TO SOW, ANOTHER TO REAP.

ST. JOHN iv. 37.

SITTING at Jacob's well, conversing with His disciples, and pointing to the fields that were white already to harvest, our Lord told them, as by a parable, that He had sent them to reap that whereon they had bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and *they* reaped the product, or entered into their labours, and enjoyed the fruit of them. "And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth." It is an elementary principle in equity, and it is apostolic doctrine, that the husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker, or the first to partake, of the fruits. But in the common law of facts in this worky-day world, it is not so; not so invariably, or without very many and very markworthy exceptions. What is denounced in the prophecies of Micah as a retributory threat, is often fulfilled in fact as an ethical anomaly,—“Thou shalt sow, but thou shalt not reap; thou shalt tread the olives, but thou shalt not anoint thee with oil; and sweet wine, but shalt not drink wine.” He that labour-eth, laboureth for himself, for his mouth craveth it of him, says one of the proverbs of Solomon; but this law of labour not always holds good, but ever and anon is love's labour lost. The labourer finds he has not laboured for himself, but for others; and what his mouth craveth of him is reserved for other mouths. *Sic vos non vobis*—even so do birds build nests that shall not be for themselves, and bees make honey that shall be the beemaster's, and oxen bear the yoke for man's profit, and sheep fleeces of which they shall be fleeced.

It is of the new heaven and the new earth that the greatest of the greater prophets is speaking when he gives utterance to the promise, "They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat," but shall enjoy the work of their own hands, and shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble. And elsewhere the promise was deemed worthy of a Divine oath, Jehovah swearing by His right hand, and by the arm of His strength, "Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies; and the sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine, for the which thou hast laboured." The deprecating imprecation, so to speak, of the protesting Man of Uz was, that if he was faulty to the extent and in the manner alleged, "Then let me sow, and another eat." And as it was the signal privilege of the children of Israel, as Moses apprised them in recounting their blessings, that the Lord their God would give them, in the promised land, great and goodly cities which they builded not, and houses full of all good things which they filled not, and wells digged which they digged not, and vineyards and olive-trees which they planted not; so was the warning sounded in their ears, at another time, but by the same voice of depth and power and consecration, that,—if unfaithful to their vows, and regardless of their high calling,—they should plant vineyards and dress them, but should neither drink of the wine nor gather the grapes; and though possessing olive-trees throughout all their coasts, they should not anoint themselves with the oil.\*

The historian of the Conquest of Mexico tells us of that Velasquez whose name is so often conjoined with that of Cortez, and whose life was a series of errors, that

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\* Cf. 2 Tim. ii. 6; Micah vi. 15; Isaiah lxxv. 22, lxxii. 8, 9; Job xxxi. 8; Prov. xvi. 26; Deut. vi. 11, xxviii. 38 seq.

he proposed others should fight his battles, and he win the laurels ; that others should make discoveries, and he reap the fruits of them. The account by Tacitus of the Battle of the Grampians has been said to be chiefly interesting for the glimpse it reveals of Roman tactics (under Agricola) at that period : all the loss and danger must fall upon the Batavians, the Usipians, the Gauls and Spaniards ; but when the day is won by the blood of her subjects, it is Rome that reaps the profit, and the legions of Rome that reap the glory, and acquire the titles of Rapacious and Invincible, Apollinean and Minervian. My lord of Leicester pens his plaint from the Netherlands in 1585 : " But so is the hap of some, that all they do is nothing ; and others that do nothing, do all, and have all the thanks." *Sic vos non vobis mellificatis apes.*

" Little dost thou think, thou busy, busy bee,  
 What is the end of thy toil.  
 When the latest flowers of the ivy are gone,  
 And all thy work for the year is done,  
 Thy master comes for the spoil."

Mr. Pecksniff's pupils draw clever plans, and he appropriates the profit and the praise. Given the time when a new idea can be pressed with a hope of practical success, it is seldom the man who first starts it who gets the credit of it ; " another steppeth down before " the original prophet, and wins the success and credit which should rightly have been his : the first mover therefore is laughed at as an " idea-monger," while the second comes in for the honours of a " successful reformer." Happy the unselfish sower beside all waters that can say with the philosophic poet, applying it to himself :—

" If thou have thrown a glorious thought  
 Upon life's common ways,  
 Should other men the gain have caught,  
 Fret not to lose the praise."

The financial story of the Great Eastern steamship was accepted by meditative journalists as a signal illustration of the melancholy and pathetic law, that all great benefactors of their kind who happen to be in advance of their times are only rewarded with failure and ruin. There was the golden grain ; but what about the patient oxen—the original Atlantic Telegraph shareholders ? It is a common saying, that projectors are in general ruined, while others make fortunes on the foundation laid by the inventors. Dr. Newman speaks of it as “notorious,” that those who first suggest the most happy inventions, and open a way to the secret stores of nature ; those who weary themselves in the search after truth, who strike out momentous principles of action, who painfully force upon their contemporaries the adoption of beneficial measures, or are the original cause of the chief events in national history, are commonly supplanted, as regards celebrity and reward, by inferior men. “Their works are not called after them, nor the arts and systems which they have given the world.” Their schools, he adds, are usurped by strangers ; and their maxims of wisdom circulate among the children of their people, forming, perhaps, a nation’s character, but not embalming in their own immortality the names of their original authors.

“Young children gather as their own  
The harvest that the dead have sown—  
The dead, forgotten and unknown.”\*

Mr. Buckle was thinking of himself when he pictured the philosophic historian laying the foundation of the science of history, while it would be for his successors to raise the edifice : “Their hands will give the last touch ; they will reap the glory ; their names will be

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\* Arthur Hugh Clough.



remembered when his is forgotten." Like Ovid's apples, *Nostrâ quoque consita quondam, Sed non et nostrâ poma legenda manu.* Like the labourers in Mr. Matthew Arnold's *Sick King in Bokhara*:—

"And these all, labouring for a lord,  
Eat not the fruit of their own hands :  
Which is the heaviest of all plagues  
To that man's mind who understands."

Columbus sails through the weedy seas, and, as Mr. Dallas words it, rasps his prow upon a western isle : the mariner who follows in his wake lights on the mainland, and calls it after himself—America. Another commentator on this trite text has more recently dismissed it with the reflection, that it were impertinence to enlarge on so patent a truism, or to illustrate anew this dull commonplace of moralists.

When Joab had fought successfully against Rabbah, he sent messengers to David, desiring him to advance with his host, and encamp against the city, and take it ; "lest I take the city, and it be called after my name." The general is seen to advantage in such a message. Some commanders of high note have unduly appropriated the gains of others, by them superseded, or on their account. To take the management of any affair of public concern from the man who has almost brought it to a conclusion, is justly, as Adam Smith observes, regarded as the most invidious injustice : as he had done so much, he should, one thinks, have been allowed to acquire the complete merit of putting a finish to it. "It was objected to Pompey, that he came upon the victories of Lucullus, and gathered those laurels which were due to the fortune and valour of another." So again Plutarch relates of Metellus, that he was overcome with grief and resentment, to think that when he had in a measure

finished the war in Africa, and there remained nothing to take but the person of Jugurtha, Marius, who had raised himself merely by his ingratitude towards *him*, should come to snatch away both his victory and his triumph. And in the Life of Marcus Crassus the same biographer shrewdly indicates the annoyance that commander felt at having written to the Senate that it was necessary to recall Lucullus from Thrace, and Pompey from Spain, to put down Spartacus and his host, now that he saw his way clear to end the conflict himself: "For he was sensible that the general who should come to his assistance, would rob him of all the honour." Aufidius, in Shakspeare, denouncing Caius Marcius, plumes himself on having

"—— help to reap the fame  
Which he did end all his ; and took some pride  
To do myself this wrong : till, at the last,  
I seem'd his follower, not partner ; and  
He waged me with his countenance,\* as if  
I had been mercenary."

A more cynical schemer is York, in *King Henry VI.*, who thus proposes to profit by the military successes (hypothetical) of the counterfeit Mortimer :

" Say that he thrive, (as 'tis great like he will,)  
Why, then from Ireland come I with my strength,  
And reap the harvest which that rascal sow'd."

The approved system with Lewis XIV. and his generals during a campaign, was for his Majesty to keep at a safe distance till success was sure, and then to put in an appearance with all the honours. In various ways the system has been practically an approved one with divers monarchs, little as well as conventionally great. Mr. Fonblanque had George IV. in view (not dreaming however of the pet Waterloo myth) when he found occa-

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\* Thought me sufficiently rewarded with approving looks.

sion once to remark, in his caustic style, that before we give luxurious kings the glory of successes which are brought about under their reigns, we should, for consistency, accord them divine honours, and suppose them to have directed the secondary causes and circumstances which have part in great events.

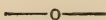
Balfour of Burley is bitter against Henry Morton on the supposed score of supersession: he, Burley, has watched, fought, plotted, striven for the reduction of the beleaguered fort; and now, when the men are about to yield themselves to his hand, "cometh this youth, without a beard on his chin, and takes it on him to thrust his sickle into the harvest, and to rend the prey from the spoiler! Surely the labourer is worthy of his hire, and the city, with its captives, should be given to him that wins it?" That is a fine stroke on the part of the Douglas when speeding with his train to relieve Randolph, at the moment sorely beset and outnumbered, in the *Lord of the Isles*; but abruptly bidding his men hold them still as they near the combat, for tide of battle has turned, and Randolph is already recovering his lost ground:

"See, see! the routed Southrons fly!  
The Earl hath won the victory . . .  
Rein up; our presence would impair  
The fame we come too late to share."

The cause of General Webb's leaving the army in disgust was, that the signal victory he gained over the French under La Motte in 1708 was, by the Duke of Marlborough's secretary, in his letter written to England, ascribed to the Duke's favourite, Cadogan, who did not come up till after the engagement. Swift had this in mind, when, in his treatise on *The Art of Political Lying*, he said that, "even upon a good occasion, a man may be robbed of his victory by a person that did not com-

mand in the action." Biographers of Sir Henry Havelock tell us of that victory at Istaliff which was entirely his own, the conduct of the operation having been abandoned to him by his commander, General McCaskill, the plan of it drawn out by him, and the execution of the plan left in his hands,—that nevertheless it was General McCaskill who received the Cross of the Bath for it. The Tancred of Tasso speaks for, and speaks home to, many when he utters the protesting plaint :

" Cilicia conquer'd I, as all men wot,  
And there the glorious cross on high I rear'd :  
But Baldwin came, and what I nobly got  
Bereft me falsely, when I least him fear'd."



## L.

### BEGINNING TO BUILD, AND NOT ABLE TO FINISH.

ST. LUKE xiv. 30.

HE that would build a tower, or turreted mansion, courts mockery and derision if he begins the work before he has counted, or calculated, the cost, to satisfy himself of having means at command to make an end of what he has begun. He "sitteth down first," (like Æneas, *sedet secumque volutat*) deliberately to make his reckoning, and to be sure that his funds will carry him through the work. And this he will do lest haply his towering enterprise become a byword on the lips of men, and his fragmentary edifice a standing jest. "Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish." And it is the very reverse of what Persius



calls *pulchrum, digito monstrari et dicier*: HIC EST, in that sort of way.

In one of his Moral Philosophy lectures Sydney Smith dilates on the large amount of talent that is lost to the world through timidity and over-calculation, and for want of a little courage. The fact is, he urges, that in order to do anything in this world worth doing, we must not stand shivering on the bank, and thinking of the cold and danger, but jump in and scramble through as well as we can. "It will not do to be perpetually calculating risks and adjusting nice chances: it did all very well before the Flood, when a man could consult his friends upon an intended publication for a hundred and fifty years, and then live to see its success for six or seven centuries afterwards; but at present a man waits, and doubts, and hesitates, and consults his brother, and his uncle, and his first cousins, and his particular friends, till one fine day he finds that he is sixty-five years of age,"—and that, in short, he has lost so much time in consulting first cousins and particular friends, that he has no more time left to follow their advice. That is one side of the question. Another is the undertaking a large scheme, like the late Mr. Buckle, or even like Lord Macaulay, and leaving it, or having to leave it, cut short, comparatively very short indeed, by death. Another is the beginning a work on a moderate plan enough, and anon finding it grow on one's hands beyond all management or control. Dr. John Scott professed to have found by experience that writing is like building, "wherein the undertaker, to supply some defect, or serve some convenience which at first he foresaw not, is usually forced to exceed his first model and proposal, and many times to double the charge and expense of it." Intellectual ambition is indeed the recognised character-

istic of almost all men of genius ; their works are often conceived upon a plan so vast and magnificent that the limits of human life and energy are insufficient for their completion, and hence it is that so many enterprises remain unachieved for long periods of time, tempting by turns the great men of many successive generations. Here and there, it is admitted, a scheme like Gibbon's may succeed under peculiarly favourable circumstances ; but, generally speaking, in this country, such plans are thwarted either by the death or by the immersion in active life of those who undertake them ; and it has therefore been suggested as desirable, that, in choosing the subjects of books intended to be the labour of a lifetime, somewhat less regard should be paid to the importance of the plan, and somewhat more to the probability of its accomplishment. *Est quoddam prodire tenuis, si non datur ultra*, as Horace has it. But man is apt to scheme *ultra vires*. As La Fontaine depicts him,—and La Fontaine knew his man ; that is to say, knew men,—

“ L'homme est ainsi bâti : quand un sujet l'enflamme,  
 L'impossibilité disparaît à son âme.  
 Combien fait-il de vœux, combien perd-il de pas ! . . .  
 Si j'apprenais l'hébreu, les sciences, l'histoire !  
     Tout cela, c'est la mer à boire ;  
     Mais rien à l'homme ne suffit.  
 Pour fournir aux projets que forme un seul esprit,  
 Il faudrait quatre corps ; encor loin d'y suffire,  
 A mi-chemin je crois que tous demeurerait :  
 Quatre Methusalem bout à bout ne pourraient  
     Mettre à fin ce qu'un seul désire.”

Bishop Warburton, that man with the monstrous appetite and the very bad digestion, as Bentley characterized him, is best known by a book—or rather, nowadays, by the name of a book, *The Divine Legation*,—the original fault of which is traced to the inordinate scale of the

design ; for he aspired to comprise in it all Gentile philosophy, and the Hebrew and Christian schemes of religion and ethics. He might as well, it has been said, have undertaken to write a universal history like Bossuet's, and a history of philosophy like Brucker's, combining with them Cudworth's *Intellectual System* and Bacon's *Novum Organum*. Mr. Buckle recanted in his second volume the conviction implied, if not explicitly avowed in his first, that such a history of civilization as he designed was within his individual means of accomplishment. He had already come to see, and to own, that such a work required, not only several minds, but also the successive experience of several generations. "Once, I own, I thought otherwise. Once, when I caught sight of the whole field of knowledge, and seemed, however dimly, to discern its various parts and the relation they bore to each other, I was so entranced with its surpassing beauty, that the judgment was beguiled, and I deemed myself able, not only to cover the surface, but also to master the details." Little did he know how the horizon enlarges as well as recedes, and how vainly we grasp at the fleeting forms, which melt away and elude us in the distance. Of all that he had hoped to do, he now found but too surely how small a part he should accomplish ; and yet, not suspecting how near was his end, he had *not* found how much smaller than the smallest of his amended expectations the quotient was really to be. In those early aspirations of his, there was, he confessed, much that was fanciful, perhaps foolish, perhaps even morally wrong, as savouring of an arrogance which belongs to a strength that refuses to recognise its own weakness. It was painful, he went on to say, "to make this confession ; but I owe it to the reader, because I would not have him to suppose that either in this, or in the future volumes [there were

to be none] of my History, I shall be able to redeem my pledge, and to perform all that I promised." Something he hoped to achieve ; but it would be only a fragment of his original design. That something it was denied him to achieve ; and dying, delirious, in a strange land, "Oh, my book, my book, I shall never finish my book !" he wailed ; himself so weak, his ruling passion so strong in death. His scheme reminds us of what Bacon wrote at thirty-one, in a letter to his uncle Lord Burleigh, "I have taken all knowledge to be my province." In a like spirit Vicq d'Azyr answered the cold query of criticism, *Pourquoi faire tant de choses à la fois ?* In a like spirit Francis Horner set about his System of the Principles of Philosophical Inquiry—accounting no presumption to be culpable while it only stimulates to great undertakings ; though admitting that it becomes excessive when there is a ridiculous inadequacy of what is performed, in contrast with what is attempted. Looking about for a possible English Muratori, and hoping to have found one in John Pinkerton, Gibbon disposed of the objection that the work laid out for him would surpass the powers of a single man, and that industry is best promoted by the division of labour, by replying that Mr. Pinkerton seemed one of the children of an almost extinct race of heroes, capable of hardest assiduous study, and with warm inclination on the side of duty ; that he was, too, in the vigour of age and health ; and that the most voluminous of our historical collections was the most speedily finished by the diligence of Muratori alone. Gibbon's own completion of his enormous design stands out a spectacle for all time. For one such achieved plan there are scores of broken-off or broken-down ones ; and many a lesser light than Mr. Mure of Caldwell has better deserved the remonstrance set up by reviewers of the first four volumes of that scholar's



*Literature of Ancient Greece*, when they professed to look forward with blank dismay to the region still to be traversed; and when they said they knew not what compact the Laird of Caldwell might have made with destiny for enjoying a life beyond that which is usually accorded to man; but that however favoured he might be, his readers would still be exposed to the ordinary infirmities of the race.

But let us pass on to illustrate the text of broken plans or promises from another point of view. It has been said to be as great a puzzle to know what becomes of all the promising young men, as it was to the little girl of the story where on earth (or under it) all the bad people were buried. And one great secret of the exaggerated notions entertained about promising youths is shown to be the confusion of conduct with capacity, of goodness with power. Intellectual intrepidity, as it is one of the most vital conditions of eminent success, is just that at which men of promise ordinarily stop short of fulfilment: "With manful assurance they march up to the fight, but discretion suddenly steps in and freezes their intent." Not seldom we are mistaken about a man having failed: the fault was our own in expecting too much—and these expectations are declared to be, in nine cases out of ten, the effect of supposing that what anybody has a passion for, that he has all the capacity of attaining. And then again, "men with the best aims constantly break down because they cannot bring their great minds so low as details and items and little detached bits of labour and forethought." People break down, too, because they do not take pains with their character, as they would with their bodies if they were going to fight or run a race: they do not "keep themselves in moral training." As St. Paul tells the Gala-

tians, they did run well for a time ; what hath hindered them?

An eminent writer has said that there is hardly a sadder feeling than that which arises from a contrast of our early ennobling aspirations with our final miserable realities, our low confessions of weakness, our small-voiced defence of the fear or the wile that has tempted us from the highway, which we thought would lead us to all things. "How few are there who, starting in youth, animated by great motives, do not, at thirty, seem to have suffered a 'second fall'!" There is an apophthegm in one of Hawthorne's early books, having made which, "Let me die upon it," said he, "for I shall never make a truer one;" and this is it: that when fate would gently disappoint the world, it takes away the hope-fullest mortals in their youth;—when it would laugh the world's hopes to scorn, it lets them live. In a later and riper work he moralizes on the number we meet with of young men for whom we anticipate wonderful things, but of whom, even after much and careful inquiry, we never happen to hear another word. The effervescence of youth and passion, he says, and the fresh gloss of the intellect and imagination, endow them with a false brilliancy, which makes fools of themselves and other people. "Like certain chintzes, calicoes, and ginghams, they show finely in their first newness, but cannot stand the sun and rain, and assume a very sober aspect after washing-day." Many are the extraordinary young men Mr. Emerson claims to have seen or heard of, who never ripened, or whose performance in actual life was not extraordinary: their superiority is admired at starting, the more so as theirs is the tone of a youthful giant, who is sent to work revolutions. But, having started, "the Colossus shrinks to the common size of man." Very mortifying is the reluctant ex-

perience, that some unfriendly excess or imbecility neutralizes the promise of genius. "We see young men who owe us a new world, so readily and lavishly they promise, but they never acquit the debt; they die young and dodge the account; or if they live, they lose themselves in the crowd." Mr. Browning talks of men who

"— have oft grown old among their books  
To die, case-hardened in their ignorance,  
Whose careless youth had promised what long years  
Of unremitted labour ne'er performed."

Politian is derided for prefixing to many of his epigrams the year of his age at which they were composed; thereby, in Scaliger's opinion, very little promoting his own reputation, because he fell below the promise which his first productions had given, and in the latter part of his life seldom equalled the sallies of his youth. Johnson moralizes on the frequency with which a youth of promise ends in neglect and obscurity; and to the long catalogue of the inconveniencies of old age, which moral and satirical writers have so copiously displayed, he would add the all too common loss of fame. In Dr. Donaldson's *History of Greek Literature* we have at once a moral, and what New Englanders would call a caution, in that Hermogenes, who, after astonishing the world with his attainments at seventeen, came to a sudden collapse at the age of twenty-five, and spent the rest of a long life in hopeless imbecility. There was a certain professor at Cambridge, taken note of by Sir Walter Scott in his diary, who used to keep sketches of all the lads of his college that bade fair for distinction in life; and these sketches he one day exhibited to a shrewd old M.A., who looked over the collection, and then observed, "A promising nest of eggs: what a pity the great part will turn out addle!" And so they do, reflects Sir Walter: "Looking round among the young

men, one sees to all appearances fine flourish—but it ripens not.” As in Wordsworth’s imagery,—

“Not seldom, clad in radiant vest, deceitfully goes forth the Morn;  
Not seldom Evening in the west sinks smilingly forsworn.”

Princes in their infancy, childhood, and youth, observes Dean Swift, are said to discover prodigious parts and wit, to speak things that surprise and astonish: “strange, so many hopeful princes, and so many shameful kings! If they happen to die young, they would have been prodigies of wisdom and virtue: if they live, they are often prodigies indeed, but of another sort.” The John Robinson of *Cakes and Ale* is typical as the bright particular star of a school, who might go anywhere, and do anything, if he liked. “I know that,” he would answer to admiring friends who told him so; and throughout life he rested content with the barren knowledge. The victim of early impressions, capable of doing twenty things better than seven-tenths of his fellows, he did nothing for that very reason. In literary history, and political, we are for ever coming upon instances like that of William Cartwright, of Christ Church, Oxford, whose fame was so great in the first half of the seventeenth century; who was to be “the most florid and seraphical preacher in the University,” and even “the most noted poet, orator, and philosopher of his time.” Plays, poems, and sermons of his survive; but none to account for what now seem such hyperbolic praises. Southey had always such misgivings as to reputations trumpeted forth in this style, because they sometimes upset the bearer, and often indicate more dexterity than strength, that when, in 1833, he heard of the “great expectations” that were being formed of “young Gladstone, the member for Newark, who is said to be the ablest person that Oxford has sent forth for many years, since Peel or Canning,” he



could only hope the young man might not disappoint his friends. The result is matter for History.

It is instructive to read of the Archbishop of Canterbury's son, "young Mr. Potter," in 1747, as promising so very greatly in politics that the world, testifies Horace Walpole, "is already matching him against Mr. Pitt." But Potter and Pitt are no longer bracketed as equals; nor indeed were they beyond Horace's time of writing, or thereabouts. Harley l'Estrange and Audley Egerton are thus invidiously compared in Lord Lytton's story, by an interested observer of the career of both: "Who that had seen you both as youths, could have thought that Audley was the one to become distinguished and eminent—and Harley to degenerate into the luxurious idler, averse to all trouble and careless of all fame?" For this latter hindrance is at least as efficient a cause, privative or negative, of deficiency and failure in the long run, as what Wordsworth traces to haply a temper too severe, or a "nice backwardness afraid of shame," that results in "favoured beings" failing, as life advances, to approve themselves really greater than their fellows, so that they merely, like the rest, and on a dead level with the rest,

" — live out their time,  
And go to the grave unthought of."

Better, saith the Preacher, is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof; and the patient in spirit, that works to an end, and to the end, than the proud in spirit, impatient almost from the beginning, and starting aside like a broken bow. *Finis coronat opus*, is the motto of the patient toiler; *re infectâ*, might be that of the impatient beginner: he begins,—and there an end.

The pregnant phrase of Tacitus in reference to Galba, has become a proverb: *Omnium consensu capax imperii*,

*nisi imperâsset.* The Earl of Lonsdale's motto, Office proves the man, *Magistratus indicat virum*, is accepted as another, but it is virtually, nay verbally, an adaptation of the sentence attributed to Bias, Solon, and others besides, 'Ἀρχὴ ἄνδρα δέλκννται. Gibbon's verdict passed on Maximus is, that whatever abilities that emperor might have shown in a subordinate station, he was found incapable of administering an empire. And of another emperor, later by some eight centuries, the same historian reports, "Michael himself, had he died in a private station, would have been thought more worthy of the empire." If a shrewd, it was also a, friendly critic, who remarked of a late distinguished, prematurely deceased, and much lamented English statesman, that it was, perhaps, better for his fame that he served in a secondary office, and that many thought him worthy of a still higher rank. Towards the middle of the last century, Carteret was marked out by the public voice for office, and, like Galba, says Earl Stanhope, would ever have been deemed most worthy of power if he had not actually attained it. Some princes are transformed into beings just short of perfection, simply because supreme power must ever be beyond their reach; and such, according to M. Beulé, was the case with both Drusus and Germanicus, whom he consigns to the numerous category of princes who promise much before the sceptre has fallen into their hands, but whose actions do not correspond to the hopes they raised, and who retain the affection of their contemporaries only on condition that they are not put to the test. M. Beulé represents father and son, in his historical treatise entitled *Le Sang de Germanicus*, as deriving all their reputation and their popularity from the mere fact that, under a bad system of government, when tyranny with its worst features is upon the throne,

the multitude are wont, as a Saturday Reviewer puts it, to idealize those who stand next to the ruler, and yet who can scarcely hope to succeed him. When the Archduke Maximilian went to Mexico, it may have seemed to him certain that he would make a good, and probably a successful, emperor. Before the catastrophe came, friendly critics in all quarters were agreed that it might be said of him, that he would have been capable of being an emperor if he had not been one.

Don Quixote tells the bachelor Sampson Carrasco, "Undoubtedly I have known many that have enjoyed considerable reputation for their talents in writing, until, by publishing, they have either injured or entirely lost their fame." Mr. Savage's Primrose used to maintain that for rising in the world there was no better plan than to do nothing, provided you have once got a general reputation for talent. His notion was, that it is better to rest on the character one has, than to expose it to hazard, by continually giving envy something to carp at. The men that succeed best, he would say, are those who contrive to get a little clique about them, who cry them up, not for what they actually do, but what they could do if they would only take the trouble. We read of Mr. Medlicott, that throughout his life it was his fortune to be thought capable of achieving anything, while in fact he was achieving nothing but that unsolid praise which is so easily silenced by the simple question, What has he done? But it is a true saying, that a man with ever so small pretensions to intellectual eminence must be worth very little if those who are intimate with him, and love him, do not honestly believe that the work which he has actually done is mere child's-play compared with that which it is in him to do, if only this or that happy contingency had come to pass.

Arthur Hugh Clough's was confessedly the familiar case of a boy who outshines and surpasses other boys—of a young man whose life seems full of promise—and then of a grown man in whom the promise seems to fade away, and who, if he does anything to reveal his powers to the outer world, does far less than his friends hoped for.

Common in every age and clime is the type of social favourite portrayed in Wordsworth's *Excursion*, for whom every fancy shaped fair expectations,—

“But all hopes  
Cherished for him, he suffered to depart,  
Like blighted buds ; or clouds that mimicked land  
Before the sailor's eye ; or diamond drops  
That sparkling decked the morning grass ; or aught  
That *was* attractive, and hath ceased to be.”

—O—

## LI.

### ALWAYS LIARS.

TITUS i. 12.

IF the psalmist went further, in saying that all men are liars, than did Epimenides the Cretan, in saying it of the Cretans only ; on the other hand, what the psalmist said was in his haste, whereas the Greek said his say in leisure—with deliberate emphasis and epigrammatic point. “One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretans are always liars.” Commentators remark that although *προφήτης* may be used simply of a poet, yet has it a peculiar propriety as applied by St. Paul to Epimenides, who is called *ἄνθρωπος θεῖος* by Plato, and is described by Cicero as *futura præsentiens, et vaticinans per furorem* ; and again, “Concitate quadam animi, aut soluto liberoque motu,



futura præsentiant, . . . ut Epimenides Cres." Undergraduate wit has constructed a familiar tangle of logic out of the Cretan's averment,—he being "one of them," and therefore, by self-conviction, not to be believed in it. Were the testimony of an alien requisite, to the same effect, and indeed in the same words, it is available in a verse by Callimachus, who was a Cyrenian.

St. Paul explicitly accepts and endorses as a true bill, this indictment of the Cretans as a race. "This witness is true." And therefore would he have his own son after the common faith, Titus, rebuke them sharply, as the minister of "God, that cannot lie." Unruly and vain talkers, he styles these "always liars," whose mouths must be stopped.

One of the so-called "Crumms fal'n from King James's table," and caught up and carried away for us by Sir Thomas Overbury, is this: "A lye of error is a fault of credulity, not of falsehood, but a presumptuous lye is that which a man makes as God made the world, of nothing." If a spoken divergence from the truth be involuntary, "we lament it as a misfortune," says Mr. Carlyle; but if the divergence be voluntary, there superadds itself to our sorrow a just indignation: we call the voluntary spoken divergence a lie, and "justly abhor it as the essence of human treason and baseness, the desertion of a man to the enemy of men against himself and his brethren. . . . Such is every liar with the tongue, and such in all nations [Crete included?] is he, at all epochs, considered. Men pull his nose, and kick him out of doors; and by peremptory expressive methods signify that they can and will have no trade with him." Justly incensed old G  ronte, sire of such a son as Le Menteur (par excellence), demands,

"Est-il vice plus bas ? est-il tache plus noire,  
Plus indigne d'un homme   lev   pour la gloire ?

Est-il quelque faiblesse, est-il quelque action  
 Dont un cœur vraiment noble aît plus d'aversion,  
 Puisqu'un seul démenti lui porte une infamie  
 Qu'il ne peut effacer s'il n'expose sa vie,  
 Et si dedans le sang il ne lave l'affront  
 Qu'un si honteux outrage imprime sur son front ?”

Cowards tell lies, and those that fear the rod, says George Herbert : “ Dare to be true. Nothing can need a lie : a fault which needs it most, grows two thereby.” Addison surmises the reason why giving the lie is the great violation of the point of honour from man to man, an affront that (even if spoken but in jest) nothing but blood can expiate, to be this,—that no other vice implies a want of courage so much as the making of a lie ; and therefore to tell a man he lies, is to touch him in the most sensible part of honour, and indirectly to call him a coward. The Spectator cannot omit under this head what Herodotus tells us of the ancient Persians, that, from the age of five years to twenty, they instructed their sons in three things only, to ride well, to master the bow, and to speak truth. Particularly delighted Lady M. W. Montagu professed to be with the punishment in Turkey of convicted liars (“ triumphant criminals in our country, God knows !”) ; they being burnt in the forehead with a hot iron, when proved to be the authors of any notorious falsehood. “ How many white foreheads should we see disfigured, how many fine gentlemen would be forced to wear their wigs as low as their eyebrows, were this law in practice with us !” By the laws of Alfred the Great, any one who broached a public falsehood, and persisted in it, was to have his tongue cut out ; and if this penalty had continued in force, everything relating to the reproduction of human tongues would, Robert Southey submits, have been thoroughly understood long before this time. The Chinese nowadays have, in some quarters, as bad a name as the

Cretans of old. We must ever remember, in dealing with them, said Mr. Wingrove Cooke, that the shibboleth of Western chivalry—the scorn of a lie as a cowardly and dishonouring thing—is to them unknown. He tells us how Commissioner Yeh had no hesitation in giving his British captors and keepers the lie direct, in the coarsest way, and could not understand why it was considered by our nation as the gravest discourtesy to use such language. “It was evident that he himself cared no more for being discovered in a falsehood than for being beaten at a game of chess.” The *Times* correspondent found it psychologically interesting to see a great Chinese gentleman shifting and shuffling, and not at all conscious that it was disgraceful to abandon as a demonstrated lie propositions which he had just before asserted as undoubted truths. Like Molière’s Alceste,—

“Voyons, voyons un peu par quel biais, de quel air,  
Vous voulez soutenir un mensonge si clair.”

*Il ne sait que mentir*, is said of Corneille’s Dorante, by those who know him best. And Dorante himself rather exults in the accomplishment, and plumes himself on his exceptional qualifications for it, and his consummate culture of it. Practice makes perfect, and he goes in for perfection. Rare endowments of nature are indispensable, as well as sedulous observance of art :

“Le ciel fait cette grâce à fort peu de personnes :  
Il y faut promptitude, esprit, mémoire, soins,  
Ne se brouiller jamais, et rougir encor moins.”

As a man who has never been within the tropics does not know what a thunderstorm means ; or as a man who has never looked at Niagara has but a faint idea of a cataract, so, said Macaulay, he who has not read Barère’s *Memoirs* may be said not to know what it is to lie. An angry writer in the *Dublin Review*, the other

day, accused the author of the *Letters of Quirinus* of beating Barère all to bits, in wilful and deliberate mendacity. Anger will make a hot partisan go great lengths in ultramontanist objurgation; and there are partisans of the Veuillot type who seem to cherish the breadth and strength and flavour of Swift, whose Lord Peter, in the *Tale of a Tub*, had such "an abominable habit of telling huge palpable lies upon all occasions; and not only swearing to the truth, but cursing the whole company to hell if they pretended to make the least scruple of believing him. . . . And that which was the good of it, he would swear desperately all the while that he never told a lie in his life." Dean Swift appears to have had a pronounced liking for the exposition of lying and the exposure of liars,—witness various sections of his curiously miscellaneous writings. To say nothing of the ironical treatise on *The Art of Political Lying*, in the composition of which Arbuthnot had probably a main share, his Scheme for a Hospital for Incurables calculates on an infinity of incurable liars in all parts of the kingdom: making allowance for citizens' wives, mercers, 'prentices, newswriters, toadies and flatterers, he cannot possibly admit a lower number than thirty thousand. One of his reflections on various subjects is, that universal as the practice of lying is, and as easy a one as it seems, he does not remember to have heard three good lies in all his conversation, even from those who were most celebrated in that faculty. But then the Dean was rather exacting. More so than his Most Reverend friend and correspondent Archbishop King, who, in one of the epistles signed "William Dublin," thinks he can partly guess "who writ the letter" Swift has mentioned: "it must be one of two or three whose business it is to invent a lie and throw dirt. . . . They have published and dispersed several libellous prints



against me, in one of which I marked forty-three downright falsehoods in matters of fact. In another, it is true, there was only one such ; the whole and every part of it, from beginning to end, being pure invention and falsehood." When Fag details to Captain Absolute his fertile mendacities on his master's account, and the latter desires him to keep within bounds, and never say more than is necessary, "I beg pardon, sir," says the valet, "I beg pardon,—but, with submission, a lie is nothing unless one supports it. Sir, whenever I draw on my invention for a good current lie, I always forge indorsements as well as the bill." His master can only bid him take care he don't hurt his credit, by offering too much security. It is one of Ben Jonson's *Discoveries*, that "to triumph in a lie, and a lie one's-self has forged, is frontless. Folly often goes beyond her bounds ; but Impudence knows none." Elia's first experience of the old Margate hoy made him acquainted with a Spanish-complexioned young fellow-passenger, remarkably handsome, with an officer-like assurance, and an irrepressible volubility of assertion, who was, in fact, the greatest liar Elia had ever met with then, or since: he was none of your hesitating, half story-tellers who go on sounding your belief, and only giving you as much as they see you can swallow at a time—the nibbling pick-pockets of your patience—but one who committed downright, daylight depredations upon his neighbour's "bank of faith." Him Elia describes as not one to stand shivering upon the brink, but a hearty, thorough-paced liar, who plunged at once into the depths of your credulity. Rousseau,—himself a self-convicted liar of no mean dimensions—was, by his own account, shocked into a hasty retreat from the Café du Grand-Commun, by the cool lying of a good-looking officer who professed to have been present at yesterday's representation of *Le Devin du*

*Village*, every particular of which he invented for the occasion, as the fancy struck him. The description was a protracted one, and it was given with equal assurance and simplicity, and the narrator was no young fop, *fat*, or fribble, but a well-mannered, middle-aged officer, with the cross of St. Louis to show on his breast ; but there was not a word of truth in his description from first to last. “ Il m’était très-clair que celui qui parlait si savamment de cette répétition n’y avait point été, puisqu’il avait devant les yeux, sans le connaître, cet auteur qu’il disait avoir tant vu,”—that is to say, Jean-Jacques himself.

Titus Oates is treated by Macaulay as the founder of a school : his success proved that no romance is too wild to be received with faith by understandings which fear and hatred have disordered : his slanders were monstrous ; but they were well timed : he spoke to a people made credulous by their passions ; and thus, by impudent and cruel lying, he raised himself in a week from begging and obscurity to luxury, renown, and power. If wholly different in kind, not perhaps very different in degree, of talent for lying, was that Thomas Lord Wharton who figures in the same historian’s pages, and whose mendacity and effrontery passed into proverbs. “Of all the liars of his time he was the most deliberate, the most inventive, and the most circumstantial.” He might, for all his breeding, have been claimed for first cousin by the Labassecouriennes painted from the life in *Villette* ; who, whenever a lie was or seemed expedient, brought it out with a careless ease and breadth altogether untroubled by the rebuke of conscience ; not a soul of them but was above being ashamed of a lie ; they thought nothing of it : to invent might not be precisely a virtue, but it was the most venial of faults.

The late Sara (Mrs. Henry Nelson) Coleridge de-

clared the worst feature of Irish character to be its disregard of truth—"that lubricity, in consequence of which one Irishman will not trust another." For truth belongs to the very substrate of the mind; and if in that deep flooring there is not evenness and unity, all above must needs be unstable, irregular, and insecure. "As untruth is the great corrupter of moral conduct, so must it be of national welfare." But she freely concedes that as the Irishman is not specially malignant or selfish, his special falsity cannot be Satanic. And it seems true enough to be a truism, that departure from truth, where no dark passions or intense selfishnesses are to be gratified, usually arises from quickness of fancy and feeling, uncontrolled by principle. To vanity, as the foundation of the most ridiculous and contemptible vices, Adam Smith traces the generation of "the foolish liar, who endeavours to excite the admiration of the company by the relation of adventures which never had any existence." This he enumerates among "follies," which, if experience did not teach us how common they are, one should imagine the least spark of common sense would save us from. Johnson thus characterized one of his and Boswell's old acquaintance: "— is a good man, Sir, but he is a vain man, and a liar. He, however, only tells lies of vanity; of victories, for instance, in conversation, which never happened." Like Falstaff claiming to have cut down Hotspur; and sticking to it when confronted with the veritable champion, and lamenting, "how this world is given to lying!"—much as he had long before constructed a sorites of lies about the men in buckram; and well qualified he was to appreciate the chirping unveracities of his old friend Shallow, about which he could moralize in soliloquy,—“how subject we old men are to this vice of lying! This same starved justice hath done nothing

but prate to me of the wildness of his youth . . . and every third word a lie." Johnson discusses with Boswell on some other occasion the highly fabulous narratives of a common friend, of whom Lord Mansfield had suggested, "Suppose we believe one-half of what he tells." Ay, said the Doctor, "but we don't know *which* half to believe. By his lying we lose not only our reverence for him, but all comfort in his conversation." Chateaubriand was only not less amused than amazed by the "inconceivable falsehoods of the future Bishop of Morocco," that Abbé Guillon, who, taking advantage of a similarity of name, pretended that he had given absolution to the Princesse de Lamballe, at La Force, after having had an almost miraculous escape from the massacre of the *Carmes*; and who boasted also that he was the author of Robespierre's discourse to the Supreme Being. "I laid a bet one day that I could make him say he had been in Russia; he did not go quite so far as that; but he modestly owned that he had passed some months at St. Petersburg."

Alison is aghast at the first Napoleon's entire disregard of truth, and the "unblushing, or perhaps it should be said *unconscious*, effrontery" with which he continued the most mendacious statements, after their falsehood had been demonstrated, not merely to others, but to himself. An able reviewer of Lanfrey's book recently described Napoleon as one of the most unscrupulous and industrious liars that ever lived—a man utterly destitute of any sense whatever of truthfulness, who lied from morning to night, told lies to everybody he met, even to the smallest people, and about everything he had to do with, even the most petty and trivial things. Some persons, the reviewer observed, are restrained from telling lies by the reflection that the people to whom they are told must know the statements to be false; but



Napoleon was far above this weakness. "He would gravely declare that he had never uttered certain words or signed a particular document before people who were quite aware that he knew they had heard him use the words or seen him sign the paper." His private correspondence, published in our own day, is shown to constantly contradict his official statements, and to be full of falsehoods. And his last days at St. Helena are known to have been spent in weaving a bewildering web of fable and misrepresentation; which "mass of lies" highly imaginative historians have garnished with little fancies and inventions of their own; so that M. Lanfrey, in setting about his History of the Emperor, had to destroy first, in order to construct.

There figures in the correspondence of Madame de Sévigné a certain Mademoiselle de Plessis, and the figure she makes is that of an incorrigible and irrepressible teller of fibs. Madame one day reproved her for the excesses of her daring in this sort, and Ma'm'selle owned herself, with downcast eyes, the greatest liar in the world. Yet, a week later, having to describe a family wedding-dinner, this demoiselle said that the first course for one day, included twelve hundred dishes. "We all sat petrified," says Madame de Sévigné. "At length I took courage and said, 'Consider a little, Mademoiselle, you must mean twelve, not twelve hundred. One sometimes has slips of the tongue.' 'Oh, no, Madame! it was twelve hundred, or eleven hundred, I am quite sure; I cannot say which, for fear of telling a falsehood, but one or the other I know it was;'" and she repeated it to the guests a score of times, and would not bate them a chicken.

Quite a little psychological study is that passage in the boyish career of Pip, in *Great Expectations*, when he invents the wildest stories about Miss Havisham's

domestic arrangements, going on from extravagance to impossibility, and from the incredible to almost the inconceivable, just to astound his perplexed examiners, and for the love of the thing, and to assert his superiority to those about him. Miss Havisham he saw sitting in her room in a black velvet coach, he tells them, with a Defoe-like simplicity of narrative and circumstantiality of detail, and Miss Estella handed her in cake and wine at the coach-window, on a gold plate; "and we all had cake and wine on gold plates. And I got up behind the coach to eat mine because she told me to."—"Was anybody else there?" asked Mr. Pumblechook.—"Four dogs," said Pip.—"Large or small?"—"Immense. And they fought for veal cutlets out of a silver basket," etc., etc. The narrator bade fair at this stage of his career to become a Munchausen in mendacity, a Cretan of the purest breed and biggest size. Honest Joe the blacksmith helped effectively to check this potentiality of mischief. "Lookie here, Pip, at what is said to you by a true friend," as regards those bouncers. "Which this to you the true friend say. If you can't get to be oncommon through going straight, you'll never do it through going crooked. So don't tell no more on 'em, Pip, and live well and die happy. . . . But bearing in mind that them which I meanter say of a stunning and outdacious sort—alluding to them which bordered on weal-cutlets and dog-fighting—a sincere well-wisher would advise, Pip, their being dropped into your meditations when you go upstairs to bed. That's all, old chap, and don't never do it no more." Little Leonard, in Mrs. Gaskell's *Ruth*, perplexed his grave and reverend seniors by showing a strange odd disregard of truth; he invented stories, and told them with so grave a face, that unless there was some internal evidence of their incorrectness (such as describing a cow with a bonnet on), he

was generally believed, and his statements, which were given with the full appearance of relating a real occurrence, had once or twice led to awkward results. The small boy was thus early qualified, one might infer, to be admitted into the Lawnmarket Club, celebrated in traditions of Edinburgh, the members of which used, when there was no post from London, to invent imaginary news, and circulate it with all pains in the absence of real; whence came the title of *Lawnmarket Gazettes*, to designate articles of intelligence which had no foundation in fact. Newspaper canards are a long-established institution. But sometimes the reporter's invention is exercised in ways least to be suspected. Sir Samuel Romilly, in 1817, took note, in his Diary, of the perpetual and extraordinary misrepresentations in the journals, of the proceedings in Chancery,—the *Morning Chronicle*, for instance, reporting Sir Samuel and others as extravagantly praising the Chancellor, and the Chancellor himself as expressing his painful anxiety to master each case, etc.,—pure fictions altogether, it seems; for, not only the expressions contained in the newspapers were never used, but nothing passed which afforded a pretext for pretending that they had been used. "The substance as well as the language, the panegyrics, and the apology, are all pure invention." Nearly thirty years earlier, Romilly had been struck by Mirabeau's cool fabrication, in the columns of the *Courrier de Provence*, of a speech he alleged to have been just delivered by Mounier in the National Assembly, and of a happy retort then and there made by the writer. "Of all this not a single word was uttered in the Assembly." Neither Mounier nor any other person made any such speech; neither Mirabeau nor any other person made any such reply. A year or two previously, Mirabeau had written to Romilly a minutely

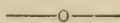
detailed account of a dispute which he supposed himself to have had with Gibbon, the historian, at Lord Lansdowne's table, and in which he expressed himself with so much violence, that he now felt he was to blame. Now, Mirabeau "certainly never had any such dispute with Gibbon;" and at the time spoken of, Gibbon was actually residing at Lausanne. Evidently it was not with Mirabeau, as with Mademoiselle de Scudéry, a canon of faith and practice, that "*il n'est jamais permis à un homme sage d'inventer des choses qu'on ne puisse croire. Le véritable art du mensonge est de bien ressembler à la vérité.*" Folks, according to Mat Prior, prone to leasing,

"Say things at first because they're pleasing,  
Then prove what they have once asserted,  
Nor care to have their lie deserted,  
Till their own dreams at length deceive them,  
And, oft repeating, they believe them."

Lying may be fostered into a passion, a ruling passion; and it is a ruling passion that has even been known, like others, to be strong in death. Hazlitt has a story of a man so notorious for a propensity to lying (not out of spite or cunning, but as a gratuitous exercise of invention), that from a child no one could ever believe a syllable he uttered; and the last act of his life did not disgrace his renown. For having gone abroad, and falling into a dangerous decline, he was advised to return home; and so, after paying all that he was worth for his passage, he went on shipboard, and employed the few remaining days he had to live in making and executing his will; in which he bequeathed large estates in different parts of England, money in the funds, rich jewels, rings, and all kinds of valuables, to his old friends and acquaintance, who, not knowing how far the force of nature could go, were not for some time



convinced that all this fairy wealth had never an existence anywhere but in the idle coinage of his brain whose whims and projects were no more. The extreme keeping in this character Hazlitt can only account for by supposing such an original constitutional levity as made truth entirely indifferent to the man, and the serious importance attached to it by others an object of perpetual sport and ridicule.



## LII.

## EVIL COMMUNICATIONS.

I CORINTHIANS xv. 33.

BY some to Menander, by others to Euripides, is referred the metrical quotation which St. Paul apparently uses as proverbial :

Φθείρουσιν ἡθη χρηστὰ ὀμιλίας κακαί.

The same apostle who warns the Corinthians that corrupt communications have notoriously, proverbially, a corrupting influence upon sound morals, exhorts the Ephesians to let no corrupt communication (λόγος σαπρὸς) proceed out of their mouth. Corruption is contagious. To communicate is to impart. The communicant cannot long remain incorrupt. The plague soon spreads, and the plague-spot soon tells. Have fellowship with the lame, and you will learn to limp, says a Latin adage : *Claudicantis conversatione utens, ipse quoque claudicare disces*. It is a catching complaint : Menander is fathered with the saw, κακοῖς ὀμιλῶν, κ' αὐτὸς ἐκβήσῃ κακός, which is all but identical with St. Paul's quotation, in spirit, though not in words. Associate with the wicked, it says, and you will become wicked yourself.

Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned? Both these are "burning questions" put by the Wise King.

Sir Thomas Browne, in his *Christian Morals*, addressing himself, after the manner of Marcus Antoninus in his *Meditations*, is special in the enjoinder, "Be critical in thy consortion. . . . Look not for roses in Attalus's garden [of poisons], or wholesome flowers in a venomous plantation. And since there is scarce any one bad, but some others are the worse for him, tempt not contagion by proximity, and hazard not thyself in the shadow of corruption." Certainly, says another of our old writers, if there be any Dalilah under heaven, it is to be found in bad society; for that will bind us, blind us, betray us, undo us. "When the Achates of thy life shall be ill, will not thy life be so too?" One rotten apple will infect the store; the putrid grape corrupts the whole cluster. "Nous voyons le vice, et le vice germe au fond de notre cœur." "Peu à peu, à votre insu, vous êtes transformés à son image, et sa corruption s'est infiltrée dans vos âmes." Know, says Epictetus in his *Enchiridion*, that if your companion be dissolute, his corruption will also reach you at length, although your mind was altogether pure and honest before. Leigh Hunt's Sir Ralph Esher has to utter a lament over an instance of the kind: "Yes: so dangerous is an ill companion to the best and cleverest persons, during youth, that what I had hardly dared to think of as a remote possibility, had turned out to be too true:" the mischief was done.

Αἰσχροῖς γὰρ αἰσχρὰ πρᾶγματ' ἐκδιδάσκειται,

as Electra has it in Sophocles. Men love not to be found singular, observes Robert South,—especially where the singularity lies in the rugged and severe paths of

virtue : company causes confidence, and gives both credit and defence, credit to the crime, and defence to the criminal. Just as the fearfullest and the basest creatures, got into flocks and herds, become bold and daring, so "the modestest natures, hardened by the fellowship and concurrence of others in the same vicious course, grow into another frame of spirit ; and in a short time lose all apprehension of the indecency and foulness of that which they have so familiarly and so long conversed with." To yield to the influence of the things and people around you, is to drift with the moral current. The first day, as Colani traces such a decline and fall, you shudder with horror. The second, you are impressed by the force of numbers on the opposite side, and begin to be half-ashamed of your isolation. The third, you incline to charge yourself with prejudices and prudery. In brief, by the end of a month, or the end of six months perhaps, descending by insensible degrees this smooth decline, you come to be of one mind with "good society," and have lost the courage to break with it. "En vertu de la loi de la solidarité on est impliqué dans la corruption commune." Every man, says Feltham, will naturally endeavour to communicate to others that quality which may be predominant in himself : "we can converse with nothing but will work upon us, and by the unperceived stealth of time, liken us to itself." Hence the stress the old moralist lays upon the choice of the company we keep, as one of the most weighty actions of our lives. "Do you see," said Dr. Arnold to an assistant-master who had recently come to Rugby, "those two boys walking together ? I never saw them together before ; you should make an especial point of observing the company they keep ;—nothing so tells the changes in a boy's character." It is an apophthegm of Rousseau's, "*Rien ne montre mieux les vrais penchants*

d'un homme que l'espèce de ses attachements." Most men, it has been said, are not only known by the company they keep, but become part of that company—much as Ulysses is made to call himself part of all that he has seen. Antisthenes the Cynic, and reputed founder of the Cynic school, was perhaps more witty than wise in his answer to reproaches for keeping bad company: "Physicians are with their patients, and yet they don't take the fever." Sometimes they do; and sometimes, even when they do not, other patients are supposed to take it through them. *Magni refert quibuscum vixeris.* Homer's goat-herd, Melanthius, sententiously asserts that

"Heaven with a secret principle endued  
Mankind, to seek their own similitude,"—

and *similia similibus corrumpuntur*, as well as *curantur*. "On vous juge d'abord par ceux que vous voyez," says Gresset's Ariste. Chesterfield bids his son depend upon it, he will sink or rise to the level of the company which he commonly keeps: "People will judge of you, and not unreasonably, by that." He applauds accordingly the good sense of the Spanish saw, "Tell me whom you live with, and I will tell you who you are." *Noscitur ex sociis*. He that lies down with dogs shall rise up with fleas, is another saw of Spanish parentage. The old Hebrew one, "Two dry sticks will set on fire one green," is cited by Dr. Trench when discoursing on the fruits of evil companionship. His predecessor in the archiepiscopal see of Dublin somewhere affirms that bad examples do much the greatest amount of evil among those who do *not* follow them: for one who is corrupted by becoming as bad as a bad example, there are ten, by Dr. Whately's reckoning, that are debased by becoming content with being better.

Of Robert Penfold, in *Foul Play*, we read, that after



herding as a convict, unjustly convicted, with the greatest miscreants in creation, he sailed for a penal colony, a creature embittered, poisoned: they had not reduced him to their level, but they had injured his mind. Very exceptional is the privilege of the woman who says, in Miss Baillie's Glasgow tragedy,—

“We, by God's grace, may sit by Satan's side,—  
Ay, on the selfsame settle, yet the while  
Be ne'er one whit the worse.”

So in another degree, and kind, is that of certain characters described by the author of *Oldtown Folks* as fashioning themselves in a manner the least to be expected from the circumstances and associates which surround them. “As a fair white lily grows up out of the bed of meadow muck, and, without note or comment, rejects all in the soil that is alien from her being, and goes on fashioning her own silver cup side by side with weeds that are drawing coarser nutriment from the soil,” so, it is said, we sometimes observe a refined and gentle nature by some singular internal force unfolding itself by its own laws, and confirming itself in its own beliefs, as wholly different from all that surrounds it as is the lily from the rag-weed. The rule holds none the less, as expounded by Falstaff in suggestive soliloquy: “It is certain that either wise bearing or ignorant carriage is caught, as men take diseases, one of another: therefore, let men take heed of their company.” Therefore, let Falstaff's companions beware of his. The veteran jester had need be witty and humorous as he is, to make one tolerant to the corrupting influence of such a man so far stricken in years. “O wicked, wicked world!” exclaims Mistress Page, with the fat knight for her theme—“one that is well-nigh worn to pieces with age, to show himself a young gallant!” Master Ford, as Master Brook, is taken in hand by him to some pur-

pose ; and Sir John congratulates himself with a chuckling, "Go thy ways, old Jack"—"I'll make more of thy old body than I have done." Prince Hal tells himself, histrionically, but all too truly, "There is a devil haunts thee, in the likeness of a fat old man : a tun of man is thy companion. Why dost thou converse with that trunk of humours, that bolting-hutch of beastliness, that swollen parcel of dropsies, . . . that reverend vice, that grey iniquity, that father ruffian, that vanity in years, . . . that villanous abominable misleader of youth, Falstaff, that old white-bearded Satan?" Even the sexagenarian, or septuagenarian repentance of such a hoary head, never yet found in the way of righteousness, is something of a sad sight, if so we may interpret Seneca's query, *Quid est turpius quam senex vivere incipiens?* just beginning to live to virtue when it is time to die. Better late than never ; and on that account the aged sensualist is fitly admonished by Horace, *Tempus abire tibi est : ne . . . Rideat, et pulset lasciva decentiſ ætas*. Cato said to an old debauchee, that age has deformities enough of its own, why add to them the deformity of vice? It is only in the *Vision of Sin* a grey and gap-toothed man as lean as death prompts a coeval to chaunt him now some wicked stave till the glow-worm of the grave glimmer in those rheumy eyes.

"Fear not thou to loose thy tongue ;  
Set thy hoary fancies free ;  
What is loathsome to the young  
Savours well to thee and me."

The most-disgusting of all made-up old reprobates is held to be he who, padded, rouged, and dyed, mingles in a circle of fast young men, and disgusts even them by the foul pruriency of his talk.

"Certes, the saddest sight by Angel seen  
Is the tired breast of some old debauchee,  
Who, worn yet wicked, gloats on what has been."

Dr. South treats it as "generally the property of an old sinner" to find a greater satisfaction in beholding him who is to succeed him in his vice, than him who is to succeed in his estate. It is in part, on the preacher's showing, the imbecility of age that "makes it the proper season for a superannuated sinner to enjoy the delights of sin in the rebound; and to supply the impotence of practice by the airy, fantastic pleasure of memory and reflection"—to refresh his decrepid effete sensuality with the transcript and history of his former life. Ben Jonson gives expression to an indignant "Note what we fathers do!" in the way of bad example and discourse to sons, only too ready to follow in it:

" — Nay, when our own  
Portion is fled, to prey on their remainder,  
We call them into fellowship of vice,  
And teach them all bad ways to buy affliction."

Marmontel denounces "l'air et le ton léger dont les vieux libertins savent tourner en badinage les scrupules de la vertu." One must be a father, he said, to form a healthy judgment on *ces vices contagieux qui attaquent les mœurs dans leur source*. Applicable in an applied sense are Southey's lines on the "cursed intercourse" by which "contagious power of mischief" was conveyed, and the infected communicant taught

"Such secrets as are damnable to guess.  
Is there a child whose little lovely ways  
Might win all hearts—on whom his parents gaze  
Till they shed tears of joy and tenderness?  
Oh, hide him from that *veteran's* withering sight,"

and shut him out from hearing that old reprobate's still more withering words. To his account of the systematic debasement, by precocious debauchery, of the naturally brave and generous mind of young Henry IV., by Anno and his coadjutors, Sir James Stephen appends the remark, that whereas Anno has been canonized by the

See of Rome, and Henry excommunicated, impartial history will reverse either sentence, and will pronounce her anathemas rather on St. Anno, by whom the princely boy was exposed to the furnace of temptation, than on him in whose young mind the seeds of vice, so unsparingly sown, sprang up with such deadly luxuriance. One of the least admiring of Chesterfield's biographers speaks of him as "awful in his smiling experience, his horrible suggestions. Of all depravity in the world there can be none so great as that of the father who would corrupt his boy." Mr. Trollope paints a quasi-Chesterfield in the person of his Sir Lionel Bertram, who did his best to banish any such feeling on the part of his son as that of restraint in free talk, which may mean loose talk ; and the reflection ensues : "There is always some compliment implied when an old man unbends before a young one, and it is this which makes the viciousness of old men so dangerous." Mr. John Forster in his *Life of Dickens* has a curious story of "a distinguished writer," their common friend, and "a man of many sterling fine qualities, but with a habit of occasional free indulgence in coarseness of speech," who once met at dinner at Lausanne "a stately English baronet" and his "two milksop sons" who were being educated into manhood with exceptional purity and innocence ; at which crisis of their career, "our ogre friend" encountered these lambs, and, "as if possessed by a devil, launched out into such frightful and appalling impropriety—ranging over every kind of forbidden topic and every species of forbidden word and every sort of scandalous anecdote—that years of education in Newgate," affirms the author of *Oliver Twist*, "would have been as nothing compared with their experience of that one afternoon. After turning paler and paler, and more and more stony, the baronet, with a half-suppressed cry, rose and



fled." The best, meaning really the worst, of the story is, that the sons, intent on the ogre, remained behind instead of following their father, and are supposed to have been ruined from that hour.

The jovial guardsman, Le Balafré, in *Quentin Durward*, is rebuked by his commander, the brave old Lord Crawford, for unseemly jesting when his nephew is by: "Hush! Ludovic, hush! thou beast, man!—If thou dost not respect my grey hairs, because I have been too much of a *routier* myself, respect the boy's youth and innocence, and let us have no more of such unbecoming daffing." So again the minstrel desires the archer in *Castle Dangerous* to "forbear light talk while my son is in your company—a boy of innocent life, and timid in conversation." Bertram opines that whoso would wish to have his own hair honoured when time has strewed it with silver, should so rein his mirth when in the presence of youth, as may show in what respect he holds innocence. Acton Bell's much-enduring mistress of Wildfell Hall avows her greatest source of uneasiness, amid accumulated trials, to have been her little son, whom his father and his father's friends delighted to encourage in all the embryo vices a child can show, and to instruct in all the evil habits he could acquire—in a word, to "make a man of him" was one of their staple amusements. The systematic corruption in such a case might be found to differ rather in degree than in kind from Simon's treatment of the young Dauphin: "The obscenity and brutality of Simon depraved at once the body and soul of his pupil," Lamartine says. We read in the criminal trials of the Ghenters in the fifteenth century, that a distinguished citizen was banished for having offended the ears of a child by unseemly talk. Washington Irving tells us, in his account of Newstead Abbey, how Joe Murray's ribald songs and jests were a

scandal to the housekeeper, Nanny Smith, who, however, being above harm herself, endured them in silence ; till at last, on his singing and uttering them before a young girl, she could contain herself no longer, but read him a lecture that made his ears ring. . The "preceptor" and afterwards friend for life of Robert Burns, Mr. Murdoch, professed to have never seen the poet angry but twice—the more noteworthy of the two occasions being "with an old man, for using smutty innuendoes and *double entendres*. Were every foul-mouthed old man to receive a seasonable check in this way, it would be to the advantage of the rising generation." Guy Patin, on hearing of the death of the debauched Des Barreaux, stigmatized him with honest warmth as one who had *bien infecté de pauvres jeunes gens de son libertinage*, and whose conversation was *bien dangereuse et fort pestilente*. Colonel Newcome wins every heart that is worth the winning, by the indignant fervour of his reproach of Captain Costigan, when singing what he called one of his prime songs, in young Clive's hearing : the Colonel's high voice trembles with anger as he denounces "such disgusting ribaldry," and demands of the smutty old sot, "Do you dare, sir, to call yourself a gentleman, and to say that you hold the king's commission, and to sit down amongst Christians and men of honour, and defile the ears of young boys with this wicked balderdash? . . . For shame, you old wretch ! Go home to your bed, you hoary old sinner ! And for my part, I'm not sorry that my son should see, for once in his life, to what shame and degradation and dishonour drunkenness and whisky may bring a man." The outraged sire would have applauded to the echo Churchill's opening lines to one of his satires :—

"The time hath been, a boyish, blushing time,  
When modesty was scarcely held a crime ;

When the most wicked had some touch of grace,  
And trembled to meet Virtue face to face ;  
When those who, in the cause of Sin grown grey,  
Had served her without grudging day by day,  
Were yet so weak an awkward shame to feel,  
And strove that glorious service to conceal."

Let nothing unfit to be said or seen, pleads Juvenal,  
enter those thresholds where youth resides :

" Nil dictu fœdum, visuque hæc limina tangat,  
Intra quæ puer est."

It was the elder Cato's proud care not to utter an unseemly word before his son, any more than he would in the presence of the vestal virgins. Even Mistress Quickly agrees that 'tis not good that children should know any wickedness ; nor can she refrain from rating Parson Evans for teaching little William Page such words from the Latin grammar as, to her mistaking ear, are of questionable propriety. "*Les enfants sont bien pénétrants !*" said Grimm, who had only too good reason, that is to say bad reason, for being circumspect in their presence : "*ils ont l'air de jouer, ils ont entendu, ils ont vu.*" It has a great influence upon a child, whether for good or for evil, urges the Caxton essayist, to mix early and habitually with those grown up—for good to the mere intellect always—the evil depends upon the character and discretion of those the child sees and hears. His construction of the *Maxima debetur* maxim is, We must revere the candour and inexperience and innocence of their minds. He tells us of his young Percival St. John, in whose frank charming manner "the virgin bloom of innocence was yet visible," spirited and manly as he was in all really manly points, that often out of respect for his delicacy, some hearty son of pleasure stopped short in his narrative, or lost the point of his anecdote. So with the Troilo of the second Lord Lytton,—

"Him that I taught to ride, to fence, to swim,  
And never yet could teach an evil thing,  
Rebuked . . . by that girl's face of his,"

the Duke of Bracciano testifies. When Harry Warrington came abruptly upon the company at dinner at the White Horse Ordinary,—including the jolly good-looking countenance of Parson Sampson, who was unclerically keeping the table in a roar,—“it may have been modesty, or it may have been claret, which caused his reverence’s rosy face to redden deeper, but when he saw Mr. Warrington enter, he whispered *Maxima debetur* to the laughing country squire who sat next him,” but who anon stolidly called out to the parson to continue his story, and got a heavy tread on his gouty toe in consequence. In a later chapter the remorseful chaplain resolves not to offend innocent young gentlemen by his cynicism. He owns himself wrong, and promises amendment, for which there is so much room. “I have got a little sister, who is at boarding-school, and, as I keep a decent tongue in my head when I am talking with my little Patty, and expect others to do as much, sure I may try and do as much by you.” M. Agricola in *Le Juif Errant* asks, Is there not in the presence of childhood a something pure; almost sacred, which has its influence on our words and actions, and imposes a salutary reserve? “The coarsest man will respect the presence of children.” We read of Vernon, in *Lucretia*, when, gradually more and more wedded to home, he dropped his old companions, and “felt a noble shame for the excesses into which they had led him,” that he now set grave guard on his talk, lest any of the ancient levity should taint the ears of his children. The reflection follows, that nothing is more common to parents than the desire that their children should escape their faults; and that we scarcely know ourselves till we have children, and



then, if we love them duly, we look narrowly into failings that become vices, when they serve as examples to the young.

Leigh Hunt had some reason for honest pride in ascribing mainly to his strictures in the press the dissolution of a so-called "academic theatre" in London, the proprietors of which, some of whom were fathers of the children, instructed the infant performers in the most iniquitous plays of our degraded wits. Frédéric Soulié was at least indignant against "*des êtres qui auraient passé de longues années de leur vie à corrompre l'âme, le corps, l'esprit d'un enfant ignorant.*" The canker, as Laertes has it,

" — galls the infants of the spring,  
Too oft before their buttons be disclosed ;  
And in the morn and liquid dew of youth  
Contagious blastments are most imminent."

A clerical essayist on Growing Old draws upon his long-ago remembrances for a hideous picture of an old man of the world telling an indecent story with a gloating relish—and instilling cynical notions of life into the minds of young lads—and even using phrases of double meaning in the presence of innocent young women, and enjoying their ingenuous ignorance of his sense ;—altogether "as degraded a phase of human nature as you will find on the face of this sinful world." The most melancholy of moral abasements is declared by a Saturday Reviewer to be that of a hoary and lecherous old man ; filth and obscenity are never so unnaturally nauseous as from the chattering lips of age ; and that tottering and toothless satyr must be indeed far gone who does not keep his foul life and conversation pretty closely to himself. Shakspeare's exiled Duke in Arden had a real kindness for cynical Jaques ; but when Jaques proposed to read the world a lecture upon sin, the Duke denounced

him to his face as one who himself had been a notorious libertine,

“And all the embossed sores and headed evils  
That thou with licence of free foot hast caught,  
Wouldst thou disgorge into the general world.”

Evil minds change good to their own nature, says Shelley's Prometheus. There is one species of corruption, as defined by Dr. T. Brown, which is exercised from a love of the corruption itself—a spirit of malicious proselytism, which forms the last dreadful stage of vice; when the grey-headed veteran of debaucheries that began in youth, and have been matured by a long life of excess in all that is gross and depraving, till he has acquired “a sort of oracular gravity of profligacy among gay profligates,” collects around him his band of youthful disciples, and relates to them the tales of merriment of other years, as an excitement to present passions. “If there be a being on this earth whom it is permitted to us to hate with a full and absolute detestation, it is surely a human demon like this.” What a picture is that Swift has painted, of one whose nerves

“—— cold drivelling Time has all unstrung,  
But left untouch'd his lechery of tongue ;  
His lechery of tongue, which still remains,  
And adds a friendly aid to want of brains.”

M. Taine's portrait of Wycherley, in his *History of English Literature*, is that of a toothless roisterer and a white-haired blackguard, stringing together dull obscenities, and dragging his spent body and enervated brain through the stages of misanthropy and libertinage; a man who used his vigorous intelligence and real talents only to his own injury and the injury of others. Johnson says of himself, in the case of Dryden, that he has no wish to conceal or excuse the depravity of the mind that can trade in corruption, and can deliberately pollute

itself with ideal wickedness for the sake of spreading the contagion in society : such degradation of the dignity of genius, such abuse of superlative abilities, cannot be contemplated but with grief and indignation. Macaulay's portraiture of the elder Wharton is that of a man who "had his eye on every boy of quality who came of age,"—nor was it easy for such a boy to resist the arts of a noble, eloquent, and wealthy flatterer, who united juvenile vivacity to profound art and long experience of the gay world : it mattered not what the novice preferred, gallantry, or the dicebox, or the bottle ; Wharton "soon found out the master passion, offered sympathy, advice, and assistance, and, while seeming to be only the minister of his disciple's pleasure, made sure of his disciple's vote." For his chief service to the Whig party was notoriously that of bringing in recruits from the young aristocracy. There are nasty Nestors who remind us of Shelley's lines—

"New lore was this—old age with its grey hair,  
And wrinkled legends of unworthy things."

There is a Lieutenant-General impaled in Mr. Thackeray's *Book of Snobs*, military department, who has reached old age and grey hairs without being in the least venerable, who tells filthy garrison stories after dinner, and is listened too, poor disreputable old creature though he be. Another chapter of that plain-spoken book exposes a certain "old wretch" of a Captain, whose hobby it is to catch hold of some beardless young stripling of fashion, and show him "life" in various and amiable and inaccessible quarters. "Faugh ! the old brute ! . . . He believes himself to be quite a respectable member of society ; but perhaps the only good action he ever did in his life is the involuntary one of giving an example to be avoided, and showing what an odious thing in the social picture is that figure of the

debauched old man who passes through life rather a decorous Silenus." Brown the elder at a Club, again, has before his mind's eye the image of "Old Silenus with purple face and chalk-stone fingers, telling his foul old garrison legends over his gin-and-water. He is in the smoking-room every night; and I feel that no one can get benefit from the society of that old man." If vice loses half its danger in being coarse, vastly more dangerous than these gin-and-water drivellers and fusty figures is the Petronius type stigmatized by Cowper,—

"Greybeard corrupter of our listening youth,  
To purge and skim away the filth of vice,  
That so refined it might the more entice."

In a later poem Cowper brands the coarser type too,—"There is a prurience in the speech of some," etc., leading to the abhorrent apostrophe, addressed to those whom, he surmises, the heathen lawgivers of old would have driven forth from the resort of men, and shut up every satyr in his den :

"Oh come not ye near innocence and truth,  
Ye worms that eat into the bud of youth !  
Infectious as impure, your blighting power  
Taints in its rudiments the promised flower ;  
Its odour perished and its charming hue,  
Henceforth 'tis hateful, for it smells of you."

Shakspeare's Parolles is with perfect justice denounced as "a very tainted fellow, and full of wickedness.

"My son corrupts a well-derived nature  
With his inducement,"

indignantly complains the noble Countess in *All's Well that Ends Well*.

In graphic outline one of the most ideal of our poets traces "a wretch who crept a vampire among men, infecting all with his own hideous ill." In the person of Blayney, one of the most realistic of our poets has depicted with almost revolting realism, a veteran, most



unvenerable, corrupter of the young ; who, from being a wealthy heir, has lapsed, collapsed, into a needy pander, to be seen shuffling through the town "to hunt a dinner and to beg a crown ; to tell an idle tale that boys may smile :—

" To be the grey seducer, and entice  
Unbearded folly into acts of vice ; . . .  
He first inveigles youth to walk astray,  
Next prompts and soothes them in their fatal way,  
Then vindicates the deed, and makes the mind his prey.

\* \* \* \* \*

" Hear the poor demon when the young attend,  
And willing ear to vile experience lend ;  
When he relates (with laughing, leering eye)  
The tale licentious, mix'd with blasphemy ;  
No genuine gladness his narrations cause,  
The frailest heart denies sincere applause ;  
And many a youth has turned him half-aside  
And laugh'd aloud, the sign of shame to hide.

" Blayney, no aid in his vile cause to lose,  
Buys pictures, prints, and a licentious muse ;  
He borrows every help from every art,  
To stir the passions and mislead the heart :  
But from the subject let us soon escape,  
Nor give this feature all its ugly shape ;  
Some to their crimes escape from satire owe ;  
Who shall describe what Blayney dares to show ?"

Should there be readers of this page who, not being readers of Crabbe, have never met with Blayney before, henceforth they will remember him, perhaps, and, let us hope, detest him devoutly, loathe him unutterably,—him, and the like of him. To them may be said, on this last page, what a motto on the title-page is meant to say in a very different sense, henceforth "ye know the man and his communication"—know him by it, and hate him for it, as a most evil communication ; haply the worst of all those evil ones that poisonously infect healthy natures, and fatally corrupt good manners.



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